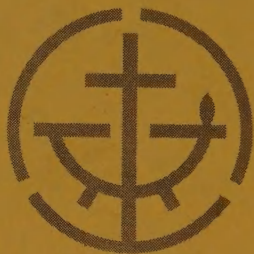


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"THE AGE-TEMPTATION."

NOTE. — This volume was sent, in manuscript and anonymous, to the eminent Christian men and scholars whose names are undersigned; who judged the work upon its merits, and returned to the writer of the Introduction their views, including the following

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THE
AGE-TEMPTATION
OF
American Christians;
AND
*CHRIST'S OWN METHOD OF GAINING THE
VICTORY AND THE KINGDOM.*

TOGETHER WITH SOME INTRODUCTORY AND
ILLUSTRATIVE CHAPTERS.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY WILLIAM S. TYLER, D.D., LL.D.

NEW YORK:
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INTRODUCTION.

THE teaching of the Christian Scriptures in respect to worldliness cannot be doubted or misunderstood. The Master struck the key-note of the doctrine in the Sermon on the Mount: "No man can serve two masters; ye cannot serve God and Mammon." And the word which he thus uttered in his first sermon goes on sounding clear, loud, sharp, and decisive through the Gospels and the Epistles to the end of the New Testament. "My kingdom is not of this world," said our King to the Roman governor, when he was about to depart through his cross to his crown. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Twice does he repeat this saying in his intercessory prayer, so dear to his own heart and that of the Father is this characteristic of his disciples. And the apostles reiterate the teaching of their Lord.

The Scriptures also show plainly what it is that is forbidden to Christians. It is not Mammon, but

the service of Mammon, that is incompatible with the service of God. It is the love of money, not money itself, or the possession of it, that is the root of all evil. It is not the world itself that is incompatible with the love of the Father, but the love of the world; as the apostle explains himself, it is the things that are in the world,—namely, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

The greatest and best life, the most useful and really successful life, that was ever lived on earth was that of him who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich,—thus teaching all men a lesson which is of more value than silver or gold, houses or lands, diamonds or crowns. The apostles also practised as they preached. “Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee,” said Peter for himself and his fellow-disciples. The same unselfish and unworldly spirit was among the most marked characteristics of the Church in the apostolic age. “And all that believed were together, and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men as every man had need.” And through all the earliest and purest and most prosperous period in the history of the Church this same unselfish, unworldly, loving, and self-sacrificing spirit was the

recognized badge of Christian discipleship; and the same result followed, the same fact was manifest as in the case of their Master, — namely, that they “overcame the world.” Let any one read in Neander’s or any other standard Church history the testimonies of friends and foes on this subject during the century or two that followed the apostolic age, together with Neander’s significant comment: “And it was this which more than anything beside wrought to the conversion of the heathen,” — and he will find in the history of the Church a most instructive commentary on the teaching of Christ and his apostles.

Of the three great enemies that the Christian has to meet and conquer, — namely, the world, the flesh, and the devil, — the conflict with the last two is chiefly personal, private, internal, and invisible: victory over them must be largely a matter of individual consciousness rather than of general observation. But the conflict with the world is visible, palpable, public; and the victory over it must be seen and known of all men. Moreover, the conflict with the world is peculiarly severe, and a victory over it is extremely difficult and rarely complete. The temptation is universal, — all must meet it; and yet how few really overcome it! how many are overcome by it! Christ overcame the world. The apostles and martyrs overcame the

world. The primitive Christians, however defective their piety may have been in some other respects, certainly overcame the world. We all know some Christians and Christian ministers of whom all would acknowledge that they have overcome the world. But of how many more would the general verdict be at best a doubt, if not an absolute denial! Hence that most significant question of the Apostle John: "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" As much as to say, all real, whole-hearted believers do overcome the world, while all unbelievers, disbelievers, and half-believers are overcome by it. The church-member who obeys the maxims of the world, walks in its ways, and breathes its spirit is no true believer, no real Christian, for he wants the badge of discipleship. Whenever and wherever professing Christians are seen to pursue after riches, honor, pleasure, or power with just as much eagerness as other men, and to be equally unscrupulous in the means which they use for the accomplishment of their selfish and worldly ends, men of the world will pronounce their profession a sham, and very likely their religion a fabrication or a delusion. Whenever and wherever a so-called Christian church relies for its increase on the same sort of attractions as a concert or a theatre, and supports itself by methods and

means which cannot be distinguished from those used by a mercantile firm or a manufacturing company, the world will not believe that it is a true Church of Christ, still less that it is a living temple of the living and true God. But let there be a manifest difference between those who profess to serve God and the servants of Mammon; let those who bear the name of Christ breathe his unselfish spirit and live his unworldly and unambitious life, — and who could resist the evidence that such a religion is from God; who could doubt that it will prevail and triumph?

It was with views like these that the following pages of this book were written. The book was written and is now published under the deepest conviction that the Church in our land is so much conformed to the world as to have obscured its best evidences and lost not a little of its power. It was written with a supreme and intense desire to do something, if possible, to check this prevailing worldliness, to bring back Christians to that unselfish and unworldly spirit which the Master required and the apostles and primitive Christians practised as well as preached, and thus bring them up to that manifest superiority and victory over the world which, in the best days of the Church, has been her vital power, her distinctive glory, and the very badge of Christian discipleship.

The author of this book, to assure himself of the legitimacy of his views and of the tendency of what he has written, has submitted his manuscript, anonymous and through my hands, to quite a number of leading men—scholars and divines—in New England and New York, who, however they may criticise some of the details or dissent from some of his interpretations, express but one opinion as to the originality, freshness, and timeliness of the work and its adaptation to do good.

The author does not seek any pecuniary profits from his work; they are all consecrated in advance to Christian charity. But his earnest aim and burning desire is to quicken the life and power of the churches and the Christianity of our land, and to help onward the triumph of Christ and his cause. He only asks it of every reader of this volume who sympathizes in these desires, to aid in every proper way its circulation among living, thinking Christians throughout the length and breadth of our country; and the writer of this introduction would urge the same request.

W. S. TYLER.

AMHERST COLLEGE, Jan. 26, 1880.

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THE AGE-TEMPTATION.



I.

TEMPTATION UNAVOIDABLE TO CREATURES.

IN the very vestibule of the Old Testament, so grand and dimly lighted and full of wonders, we meet the picture of the tempted Adam; and prominent in the open, sunny portico of the New Testament hangs the panorama of the tempted Christ. The two scenes thus represented are both most memorable. The personages are each styled in Scripture "the Son of God;" the first being the only-created, the second the "Only-begotten." The former was "of the earth," the "first father" of an "earthly" race; the latter was "the Lord from heaven," the founder of a heavenly kingdom, or "family," of the redeemed. Whatever differences there were in their natures and histories, there were, nevertheless, such points of resemblance that the first Adam "is the figure of him that was to come." And one marked

point of this likeness lay in the fact of their common temptation. They were both tempted, and their temptations were eras; and in their temptations, however seemingly unlike, there was a strong underlying similarity. Moreover the two temptations were representative. They foreshadowed and illustrated the methods, the aims, and the results of the tempter's subtle assaults upon each and all of those two distinct classes of men whom Adam and Christ severally represented. And may we not, therefore, expect to find, in the Scripture accounts of these two historical yet typical scenes, truths and lessons of such value to our tempted race, and to the tempted Church of Jesus, as will both explain and justify the placing of those two Temptation pictures in the very portals of the two Testaments?

For the fact of temptation is found on the first pages of every human life, equally as of the Scripture. Assaulting each human soul upon the first awaking of the conscience, it pursues it, and lays wait for it even at the gate of death. It has assailed thus all the successive generations from Adam downward, and its power still falls upon the world of living men with the steadiness of the trade-wind, and, not seldom, with the might of a tornado. No condition escapes it. It is, indeed, "common to all" men. And it has also invaded

the realm of the angels, — of the fallen, of course, and likewise, therefore, of the unfallen, — and has reached all moral beings known to us in the universe, save One, the Infinite, who “cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man.” And it comes to man and to all other finite beings, not as an accident, not as an arbitrary Divine appointment, but as a condition of finite moral existence, as an unavoidable necessity of progressive creaturehood. Was it not needful that Creative Benevolence should implant in created moral beings, as a condition of their progress, the inextinguishable aspiration after enlargement, development, and an ever higher life? And do not such aspirings imply a temptation to hope and strive after the coveted exaltation by doing evil? The yielding to enticements to evil, while infinite Love and Grace offer their help, can never be unavoidable. But it quiets our hearts and hushes our painful questionings, to believe and know that temptation comes to finite and progressive moral beings simply as a necessity of such existence and creaturehood; and that victory over it here is a means to the soul’s everlasting triumph and security.

The forms and the force of the temptations which waylay different human souls and different ages vary. But may not even these be the result of laws which are a necessity to infinite creative Love, —

such as the law of free personal choice, whereby each man decides for himself, more or less, the influences and atmosphere that shall mould his life; such as the law of entailed consequences and proclivities, which is so mighty and needful a motive to the right and wise living of all parents and progenitors; and such as that law of sympathy and mutual moral influence which renders beings of the same or of kindred natures so powerful for good or for evil over each other? It was under this latter law that both Christ and Adam were tempted, through the subtlety of a malignant and fallen being of an allied race and from another world.

II.

THE TEMPTED ADAM A REPRESENTATIVE OF OUR TEMPTED HUMANITY.

IN Adam's perfect paradise of delights, though of every tree of the garden save one he might freely eat, and though the crown of his joy was his childlike communings with Jehovah "in the cool of the day," yet there were narrow and recognized limitations of his creaturehood. His attainments and powers and possibilities were all limited. With no ladder to scale the skies and no instrument to explore the earth, he stood upon a scanty island hemmed in on all sides by the unfathomable depths of a shoreless ocean. Small as were his powers of doing, and meagre as were his capabilities of knowing, his aspirations were boundless, reaching up toward the Divine. With an instinct and longing to be like God, he was yet feebly and ignorantly human. Could he but break through the narrow fences which so shut in his creaturehood, what grand possibilities might lie before him, what god-like knowledge, what limitless progress, what divine

exaltation and enlargement! And the creaturely limits that so stinted and stifled his being were all represented to his mind by that one forbidden tree of his Eden, and by his Maker's command, "Thou shalt not eat of it!" — and yet was not this the very "tree of the knowledge of good and evil"? Against this one command, as against the barrier to his progress, enlargement, and godlikeness, the swelling surges of his soul begin to rise, as the stormy sea-waves dash themselves against a projecting headland. Nay, more, might not this very prohibition mark the actual and easy gateway to a paradise wholly without checks, — to that freer, grander, higher life toward which he so eagerly aspired? And was not that a "tree to be desired to make one wise"?

The one Divine restriction upon his paradise life begins now to seem to Adam like a denial of all things, and there crowds upon his mind the painfully suggested doubt of Jehovah's sincerity of love to him. And this suggestion at length takes form in the Serpent's tempting, bitter words, "Yea, hath God said ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" And just here there thunders through his soul that prophecy and warning of Jehovah, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die!" But for this he would not hesitate longer. And yet Jehovah had known good and evil always, and it had

not been death to him! A being so good and kind and loving could not have meant what He seemed to say. Might not those words of warning be but a too cautious love, foreboding danger in that which was really the road to his highest godlikeness and glory? And this thought and hope again finds language in the tempter's assuring speech, "Ye shall not surely die." And then came the suggested treason: "This God can be no friend of yours, thus to bar your only road to an enlightenment and liberty like his own. Your hope of elevation and progress lies in independent self-assertion, even in spite of his word. 'For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.'"

In this momentous mental struggle of our first parents we recognize, thus far, three distinct elements. They were borne onward, first, to the distrust of God and of his goodness because of the limitations, express and natural, of their creaturely life. They were then tempted to disobey God's law, through presuming upon his leniently falsifying his own words. And, thirdly, they were moved to an asserted independence, and to the utter renouncing of Jehovah as one who deceitfully barred by his cruel command the very gateway to their exaltation and godlikeness.

Thus far their temptation had been wholly upon

the intellectual side of their being. But all other sides were to bear, likewise, the pressure and test of this assault. Naturally, they loved the beautiful; and it entered into their moral trial that a thing might be "pleasant to the eyes," and yet prohibited and deadly. Accordingly, to their æsthetic nature that beautiful forbidden object made its mute and mighty appeal. Closely bordering upon this sensuous front of their nature was the animal side, — their human, and as yet uncorrupted, sensibility to tastes and odors and to all appetitive delights. To this sensibility also that tree appealed, as being "good for food." Moreover, there was a social element in these first human souls, — a doorway to the citadel of their hearts which another's sympathy, persuasions, and example might unbar. And into the social nature of the first of woman-kind there entered an easy confidence which exposed her to be more readily "deceived;" while in the primal man there was a sympathizing chivalrousness, moving him to follow her into evil even if "not deceived." Thus assailed upon every front of their many-sided being, thus plied by a six-fold enticement and argument to evil, they yielded, — the one beguiled by the subtlety of the Serpent, the other accepting the gift and the death at the hand of his fallen Eve.

But this first tempted pair — "the Adam" — had

a human nature, and nothing less nor more. And might we not rationally anticipate finding in their temptation a type of all the temptations of beings possessing the same complex nature, the same body enveloping a kindred soul? And need it surprise us to find represented in this spiritual trial and conflict of the first of human kind even the elements and essence of all the temptations of man as man; nay, more, the germs of all the organized, systematized, and historic forms of evil which are now misleading, or have ever beguiled, classes and nations of mankind? With the mass of men the force of temptation may, indeed, be lessened on the intellectual side and exaggerated on the animal, if not also upon the æsthetic, side of their being. Nevertheless, the same elements entering still into our human nature, we look for like elements in our human temptations. And do not history and experience ratify the anticipation? For, first, men are and have ever been met by the same two classes of tempters,—the one the subtle, selfish, calculating, and sometimes malicious class, who riot in the wrecking of others' virtue and happiness, and who are so fitly represented by the Serpent in Eden; and the other the Eve-like fallen ones, who with a certain persuasive friendliness seek the sympathizing companionship of their fellows in the way of sin and death. And the intellectual element in Adam's

temptation, — the human aspiration after a certain godlikeness in knowledge, power, wisdom, and superiority to restraint and law, — how is this reproduced perpetually in historic and still existing forms of falsehood! Astrology, so mighty once, and powerful even in mediæval Europe; magic, so potent in the old Roman Empire and amid the heathenism of to-day; necromancy, the child of ancient Egypt, and alive in the Spiritism of our own times; the once-honored oracles and divinations and auguries of Greece and Rome; and even the subtle, historic systems of philosophy, falsely so-called, which have offered men, as the highest wisdom, the brilliant fancies and baseless theories of man's own imagining, — all these are but temptations, like Adam's, of our restless, aspiring creaturehood. And in strange company with these may we not range that world-wide, morbid, human craving for some physical agent — such as opium, hasheesh, alcoholic stimulants, etc. — that will temporarily lift men into an imagined dignity and fulness and power, into a transient glow and delirious dream of exaltation and superhumanness, — a form of the temptation to “be as gods” which seems the climax of Satanic irony. Moreover, the very Eden arguments of Adam's tempter have still voice and power. For, against the Christianity which utters in the face of all evil the genuine

“Thou shalt not” of God, how many schemes and systems keep alive that primal tempting taunt, “Yea, hath God said ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden!” And how many living delusions, Pagan and so-called Christian, Sadducean and Pharisaic, still cheer on the ungodliness of their votaries at least, if not of all men, by that same Satanic promise, “Ye shall not surely die!”

But of all human temptations in every age and under all conditions of society, from Adam onward to our own times, the most striking and comprehensive type in Eden was that “forbidden tree.” It was the work of God’s own hand. In its lawful use as a visible object in that pleasant garden, it was harmless; its abuse was death. It was a thing “pleasing to the eyes;” it had power to minister animal delight; it was also “to be desired to make one wise.” And what has been its perpetual antitype? What, in the world-wide garden of our tempted race to-day, represents and reproduces that tree of Eden? Does any thing so answer and fulfil the type as the material cosmos, the vast grand universe of things created, whether as now found in their native simple worth and beauty, or as remodelled and manipulated by the art of men? Built to provide temporarily for the generations of mankind a home and school-room and gymnasium, to furnish for them a matchless

ever-changing art-gallery, a museum of all wonders and charms and grandeurs, a laboratory, an observatory, and a university, this universe was divinely planned and constructed to reveal as material forms could best do it the power and Godhood of its Creator, and to draw men toward his reverent, grateful service. But it was liable to utter perversion and fatal abuse. For invited guests may make bold to claim the freedom and ownership of the hospitable mansion. They may roam over its apartments, and revel in its magnificence, and riot in its melodies and sweets and bounties, and yet ignore the presence and generousness and rights of their munificent host. And subjects, too, even under the best of governments, may rise in all but unanimous revolt, may seize on the wealth and treasures of their sovereign, and turn against him the artillery that bears the stamp of his own empire. To such sin as this mankind have always been tempted by three things in the material world; namely, by its æsthetic "pleasantness," by its appetitive "goodness," and by its curious and "scientific" wisdom. All these mankind have coveted and sought in an arrogated independence of the true God, and in distrustful, lawless, and unloyal contempt of his love, promises, and sovereignty. As Paul charges, they have "worshipped and served the creature [or the crea-

tion] more than the Creator." To Paganism the cosmos furnished its earliest divinities—"Nature-gods." And under its forms and symbols they deified their own master-passions, their sensual pleasures, and their favorite sorts of earthly good. They turned the material universe into a Pantheon; and made, each class and each individual for themselves, idols of the things they most desired and delighted in. Mahometanism, Judaism, and Christianity have each restrained, under their sway, this visible and formal idolatry. But to "natural men," to human nature under whatever form of religion, this vast world of material things,—its gold, its grandeurs, its æsthetic delights, its sordid animal pleasures, and its curious wisdom,—has proved the grand antitype of that fascinating forbidden tree of Adam's paradise. Intellectually, this temptation has culminated in "scientific" materialism. Practically, it has reached its climax in the selfish and supreme earthliness of human lives and hearts. The temptation of the first human pair, reproduced thus perpetually in its elements and nature, has also been reproduced in its results; and "death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

III.

THE TEMPTED CHRIST, THE REPRESENTATIVE OF ALL TEMPTED CHRISTIANS.

IN the Jesus of the Gospels, as in the Adam of Eden, there was the glory of a genuine and sinless manhood. Whatever their differences, they were both men. And their common humanity naturally involved a measure of likeness in the moral trial and conflict of the two. As a veritable man, Jesus stood on the same platform with Adam. And, accordingly, we find in the Scripture histories of the two temptations that they were both enticed to the same three forms of evil coming in the same order, though by different arguments. They were alike moved, first, to the distrust of God,—the one because his aspiring creaturehood was under restraint, the other because he was famished and apparently forsaken in a foodless wilderness; second, to the transgression of a Divine command,—the former through presuming upon impunity in the face of an expressed forewarning of “death,” the latter through the perversion and

abuse of a Divine promise; and, thirdly, to an utter renunciation of God, — the first Adam through the idea that sin was the one road to the godlikeness he longed for, and the second Adam through the promise and hope of his coveted Messianic kingdom on condition that he would bend his knee as a vassal to Satan.

But there were differences in these two cases, more marked and significant even than the resemblances. Their surroundings, evidently, were in utter contrast. Adam, in the midst of a sorrowless, sinless, perfect world, had no call to benevolent sacrifice or suffering, or to any other work except to keep and develop his garden and his heart under the teachings and in the blessed fellowship of God. Before the Man of Nazareth, on the other hand, lay a blighted world, and a race of immortal beings sinful and lost, led captive and ruled over by Heaven's arch-enemy, the betrayer of Adam. And he had come, commissioned to take upon him the nature and likeness of this race, to teach and redeem and rescue and rule over them as their Saviour and King. Like the "strippling" David, he was Israel's anointed yet unknown king, volunteering to meet in single combat the champion and leader of God's enemies, with the view of achieving a grand deliverance. The natures, too, of these tempted ones were widely un-

like. In the one were only the elements of a pure humanity and the natural aspirings of a finite creaturehood; while in the other there were all "treasures of wisdom and knowledge," even the "image" and "fulness" of the invisible God, without any sign or token of creaturely aspirations. Hence, while in the first case the tempter's malicious aim was to blight Adam and Eden and the whole race of man, bringing the generations of men into sympathy with his rebellion and under his control; in the second case it was to foil the Messiah's attempt at rescue, and frustrate utterly Christ's great plan and mission for the redemption and salvation of mankind. We mark, therefore, in Christ's temptation an utter change in the tempter's arguments and tactics. There are here no tempting offers of curious knowledge, or of æsthetic pleasures, or of positive appetitive enjoyments. And the motives and appeals are all such as could have had no power or place in the relations and circumstances of the first Adam. The heart of Christ was "love." He yearned for the accomplishment of his world-errand. The "passion of his heart" and purpose of his life was the world's salvation. And it is to this very desire and aim that Satan addresses his master-wiles. Moreover, it was peculiar to the Son of God, that, on his coming into the world, there lay before

him a divine and prophetic programme of his whole Saviour-work on the earth; and this plan, being in fact the "wisdom and power of God" unto men's salvation, was the only plan and method by which Christ could ever accomplish the errand of his love. It therefore became the one malicious intent and endeavor of his adversary, through the utmost subtlety of intimidation and deceit and falsehood, to prevail upon Christ to alter or renounce this Scripture law and programme of his life and work. And nothing would be so likely to move him to this as the suggestion of some other plan and method of his life that would be less offensive, and more popular with mankind.

But such a temptation as that could not move Christ as a mere "natural" man like Adam. It could be addressed to him only as a "quickening Spirit," the Saviour, a servant of Jehovah, enlisted in the work of bringing the world of mankind back to God. In his temptation, therefore, the Son of God stood as the representative, not of man as man, but of the "new mankind," — of all who are sympathizers and fellow-workers with him for the world's salvation. And while Eden foreshadowed all *human* temptation as such, so that wilderness scene reveals all *Christian* temptation in its elements, and also in its methods. The one represents tempted humanity; and the other, tempted Chris-

tianity. Nor is the resemblance in the latter case partial and generic merely; it is exact and complete. For our "high priest" was "tempted in all points like as we are." There is no element in his people's temptations which was not also in his own. It is true, indeed, that the Christian has a double genealogy. He is a child of the fallen Adam as well as a child of God, and possesses two conflicting natures,—the "flesh" and the "spirit," the "old man" and the "new." While as a man, therefore, his temptation takes the likeness of Adam's, so as a Christian it resembles his Lord's. And even Christ's own moral conflict, also, so far as it was one with Adam's, illustrates that of every man; while in its peculiar and distinguishing features it represents the enticements and dangers of all genuine Christianity.

IV.

CHRIST'S WILDERNESS TEMPTATION; AND ITS THREE FINAL CONFLICTS.

THOSE thirty memorable years of growth, of filial subjection, and of manual toil had now gone by, and the crisis of his life had come. Just before, at the Jordan and underneath the opening heavens, his Father's own voice and the dove-like descending of the Spirit had acknowledged, "anointed," and inaugurated him as the Son of God, the long-predicted Messiah. "And immediately the Spirit led him into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil." For Satan, the conqueror of Adam, the deceiver of mankind, and the arch-enemy of Christ, was now the *de facto* "prince of this world." And from the successful tempter of Adam and of his race Christ will win back the victory, just where the battle had been lost. Heralded from the very beginning as one that should "bruise the Serpent's head," he will — while illustrating objectively to his followers for ever the malice and subtlety and strategy of the common

enemy — open and reveal to them, by the methods of his own triumph, their only and sure road to victory.

This wonderful wilderness scene we cannot approach as coming to look upon a mere tragic show. Reverently would we draw near, "putting our shoes from off our feet," that we may study the actual moral combat of the world's deceiver with the world's deliverer, — the Waterloo of human history, if not that also of the moral universe. The one deep intent and purpose of the tempter is the utter defeat of Christ's divine errand to this earth. And we behold the Son of God as assaulted upon the human — the only temptable — side of his being. His surroundings are as unlike as possible to those of the tempted Adam. He is in a "wilderness;" around him are the gloomy ravines and chalky hill-sides of the desolate billowy waste of Quarantania, lying between the Jordan of his baptism and the Jerusalem of his crucifixion. And he is alone, as afterwards in Gethsemane. This battle he must fight without hindrance or help from man or angel. Through all these "forty days tempted of Satan" he is alone with the tempter and "the wild beasts." And yet, present to his sad thoughts, and pressing upon his burdened heart, the whole world of mankind are here. Even the human generations to

the end of time whom he has come to save, all gather around him now. And these are the fulcrum and might of Satan's temptation and power. For their wishes and their welfare are at variance. Their longings and ideals and anticipations respecting the promised deliverer utterly disagree with their real supreme interests and deepest needs. Even the Hebrew people, so long entrusted with the "oracles of God," have secularized the Scripture representations of their coming king, and have proudly, scornfully turned to the wall their own prophets' grand picture of a suffering, dying Messiah. Grouped around the central figure in that wilderness scene, and crowding its whole background, we accordingly behold — vividly present to the mind and heart of Christ — the world's living multitudes and all the coming ages, filled with secularized and selfish desires and hopes respecting the Saviour, and the kind of salvation that they crave.

On the other hand, the Man of Nazareth had from his early childhood been pondering "in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." The whole pre-written prophetic history of his Messiahship is now vividly before his mind. From that first bold outline, drawn in Eden, of the "seed of the woman," to the last line and shading of Malachi's pencil, the whole divine picture of him-

self as the coming Christ, and the entire Scripture panorama of his life stand in his view. This Christhood and life and work are the "commandment" he has received of the Father. But such a Messiah as this the world does not desire, and will not receive. And right here come the burden and pressure and conflict of Christ's tempted, struggling soul. On the one hand are mankind's real and urgent spiritual needs and the Old Testament prophecies of his Christhood; and on the other hand are the world's earthly anticipations, dreams, and longings. Full well and sorrowfully he knows that men will be disappointed in him. When they shall see him, they will discover "no beauty that they should desire him." They will scorn him for his very lowliness and unworldliness, and will hate him for his faithful reproofs. They will reject his spiritual teachings and a spiritual redemption, and will despise his provision for the hunger and thirst of their souls. And their disappointment will turn into bitterness and hostility and rage. Clearly he foresees his own persecution and suffering, and that of his faithful witnessess. Already the dark shadow of his own near future falls upon his heart. Across the narrow chasm of years he sees Gethsemane, and the two trials, and the open rejection, and Calvary. And he hears, amid the stillness of those

desert solitudes, that bitter, maddened cry of the misguided multitudes, "Away with him! away with him! crucify him!" With such alternatives before him, could he be in any sense human and not be profoundly moved? Foreseeing in his own experience, and in the annals of his church, and in the aggravated wickedness and condemnation of the world, that which has been the darkest, saddest, most revolting record in all human history, how could he be the perfection of true and loving manhood, and not hesitate and recoil? And is it strange that now he "suffered, being tempted"?

And the question which so engrosses and agitates his soul concerns the possibility of modifying in any wise the divine, prophetic plan of his work and life as the Messiah. To abandon utterly his undertaken errand of saving sinners, entirely to turn aside from that Messianic career and character so clearly foretold by Jehovah's prophets, wholly to conform his Christhood to the spirit and demands of a worldly world,—those were things which even the bold tempter dared not suggest. But may he not, in one way or another, lessen the obstacles to men's acceptance of him and of his religion? Can he not concede something to the world's actual wishes, expectations, and ideals? Is it not possible, while consulting not less men's spiritual and immortal needs, to

provide more directly and prominently for their earthly wants? Or, while himself fully obeying and illustrating the law of loving self-denial and self-sacrifice, may he not give some larger license to the human love of ease, display, and pleasure? And, while not less loyal himself to the spirit and claims of Heaven, can he not make room in his teachings and religion for more of the spirit and life of the world? And by some such methods may he not lawfully render his Christhood and Christianity less obnoxious and more attractive to the eyes of men, and draw souls thus in larger numbers and more readily and powerfully to himself and his salvation? Thus he stands, a Heaven-sent physician in the midst of world-wide, deadly, epidemic sin, and bringing a divine, perfect, and yet unpalatable and unpopular remedy. The supreme philanthropist, he has come to urge upon a race deceived and enslaved the one Heaven-approved, yet to them humbling and distasteful, method of their own salvation. And his heart and thoughts wrestle with the question how he may overcome their aversion, and win men to accept the offered grace of Heaven. Absorbed and troubled, he loses all desire for food. And as the ocean heaves and tosses and moans, yet keeping ever within its bounds; and as the planets sway in their now lengthening and now broadening

orbits, yet all the while true to their centre and their law,—so the soul of the world's Redeemer struggles in his forty days of inward conflict, "yet without sin." Such,—in view of the true humanity of Jesus, of the known circumstances of the case, and of the tenor of Old and New Testament Scriptures,—we believe to have been *the essence* of that prolonged and wonderful temptation in the wilderness.

And now, as these decisive days draw to a close, the Evangelists Matthew and Luke draw for us the curtain; and we stand face to face with the matchless scene. The view is panoramic; and its three successive scenes throw back a revealing light upon the three forms of temptation that had assailed all these days the troubled soul of Jesus. The tempter's three final and decisive assaults seem to have reference, successively, to Christ's three offices as prophet, priest, and king. For these the world, in some blind recognition of its own deepest needs, had already its own accepted counterparts and substitutes,—its triad of heroes. The magician-prophet, the ostentatious wonder-working priest, and the magnificent, mighty, world-pleasing conqueror and king stood at this time foremost among men. And Christ's tempter, backed by the demand and hope of a blinded world, would persuade the Messiah to

conform himself to one, or another, or all of these.

1. The first of these three final temptations had respect to Christ's prophet-work. The wide Roman world around him was full of mountebanks, sorcerers, and wonder-working magicians; and these received the hero-worship of the unthinking multitude. They were men like the Simon Magus, and Elymas, and Jewish "exorcists," and Ephesian magicians of New Testament history. Into a world thus pre-occupied and deluded, Jesus was soon to go forth as the supreme prophet and ambassador of God. He is well acquainted with the treatment and fate of faithful Old Testament prophets. He knows, also, human nature, and "needs not that any should testify of man." "Born" into the world that he "should bear witness to the truth" and be such a prophet as Moses and Isaiah had foretold, endowed with supernatural powers that his miracles might "bear witness that the Father had sent him," yet he sadly realizes that mankind "love darkness rather than light," and foresees that men will "hate" him if he "testifies that their deeds are evil." And painfully he anticipates the storms of human rage and persecution that shall beat upon those, all down the ages, who shall imitate his faithful witnessing.

On the other hand, if he would but sink the offensive prophet in the popular wonder-worker; if he would make less of his prophetic errand and embassy, and more of miraculous "bread-making" and other humanitarian works and wonders; if, instead of dispensing Heaven's truth to human souls, he would minister rather to all men's earthly needs and cravings,—then he would be indeed a prophet after their own heart. Easily outshining and casting into the shade the popular impostors of the times through his transcendent supernatural powers, feeding the hungry everywhere by miracles like Moses' "manna" in the wilderness, the delighted wondering crowds will follow him across seas and desert wastes, that they may "eat of his loaves;" and they will "come and take him by force to make him a king." And here, in the lonely wilds of Quarantania, so near Jerusalem, he might by one act set himself forth as the great Moses-like prophet and bread-maker. But this divine ambassador, like all other true witnesses for God, trusted for supply and success to the certainty of the Divine promises. It had been written of the Messiah, that "he trusted in God." But now, having fasted forty days, he is "hungered;" and his Father has left him without supply. It is Satan's opportunity to tempt him to distrust his Father's care and covenant, and, taking his relief

into his own hands, to meet his own urgent necessities independently and by a miracle; entering thus upon his career as a prophet "bread-maker." And now the arch-seducer, suiting his wile both to Christ's high pretensions and to his needy circumstances, suggests, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." But the tempter's subtlety is baffled; and the Christ stands firm upon the promises.

2.¹ But, like all profoundly agitated human souls, the heart of Jesus inclines, like a pendulum, to vibrate between extremes. From gloomy, hopeless distrust human nature easily rushes into presumption. And the wily adversary, having in vain assailed Christ's defences on the right wing, now masses his forces on the extreme left. If he will not doubt, he may presume. If he will cleave to the promise, he may transgress the law. For, like all other men, Jesus was "made under law." "Thy law is within my heart," was the prophetic unfolding of his inner life. And the essence of this law was love. Toward his Father it was obedient love. And toward the world,—such a world as he had come to save,—it was self-renouncing, suffering love. It involved voluntary self-humiliation, self-denials, and, as a man, utter

¹ We accept, here, after Dr. Langé, Matthew's order of the last two temptations.

self-sacrifice. All this he knew was in the prophetic programme of his life as the Messiah-priest. He was aware that he "ought to suffer these things and to enter into his glory." And that he might so suffer, as both priest and victim, as the antitype or substitute of all other priesthoods, the Father had "prepared him a body," and written down beforehand his willingness "in the volume of the Book."

But such a Messiah would never please mankind. For ever he would be to false-hearted Jewish formalists a "stumbling-block," and to self-conceited sceptical Greeks, "foolishness." To human nature, proud and self-indulgent, "the offence of the Cross" would never cease. And, in fulfilling the Scripture predictions of his priestly work, he must not only put to his own lips the bitter cup, but pass it on to all his genuine followers, who, in ages of persecution and in times of peace, must be either dying sacrifices or "living sacrifices," as a Christlike philanthropy might demand. But in no such ways had the then triumphant priesthoods, Jewish and Pagan, won their sway. They were ruling the world of men, especially the devout and worshipful, by the easy power of religious ostentations, of temple shows, and of pretended supernaturalisms. If now he would modify that plan of priestly humiliation

and death; if he would substitute miracles of religious and temple display for the miracle of love; if he would make his Christianity a compound of poetic or seeming devotion with self-indulgent worldliness; and if he would but consent to gratify Jews and heathen by something like a "sign from heaven," — then, easily and surely, with his matchless wonder-working powers, he could supplant all the world's false hierarchies, and be hailed as the Heaven-sent chief-priest of mankind.

And now the curtain again rises, and the tempted one stands "on a pinnacle of the Temple." Below him lie the broad consecrated area and the reconstructed magnificent porches, arches, gateways, and columns of Herod's temple. Beneath him, too, are seen the bleeding sacrifices, the worshipful crowds, the busy Levites, the officiating priests, and (it may be) the grand high-priest himself, the centre of all wondering eyes, clad in his gorgeous robes of office. How exempt from all painful self-sacrifices and offensive humiliations would be such an ostentatious, easy-living priesthood! And how could it, at once, be won by him! "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down," whispers the cunning tempter. "It will display your peerless powers, as God's own Son. It will be proof of your Messiahship. It will open your way to the highest priestly power and rever-

ence. Nor can it harm you in any wise, for it is written, 'He shall give his angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.' Cast thyself down!" "Down," — the way of easy, fleshly indulgence, and of worldly conformity.

But from this mingled subtle wile, tempting him to misapply and abuse God's promise unto the disobedience of the fundamental law of his priestly office and work, Jesus recoils. Clearly he sees that all vain and empty display of his matchless powers in the Temple of the Most High, and any shrinking from the Divine, prophetic plan of his lowly, suffering, self-sacrificing priesthood, would be fatal presumption. One wrong step now would commit him to a false career. And his reply both lays open and repels the sin to which he was enticed: "It is written again, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord, thy God.'"

3. Again the panorama changes, and a wholly new scene is presented. The stand-point is itself suggestive. Jesus is on "an exceeding high mountain," and looking forth upon the wide, wide world of men. He is thinking of his long-promised kingdom, of which, at the Jordan, he had been "anointed" to be king. He yearns over men with a boundless love. He longs to see them take on his easy yoke. He cannot bear to teach and suffer, to

be God's prophet and God's priest, in vain. The willing, world-wide self-surrender of men and nations to his saving power and blessed rule is the passion of his heart, the "travail of his soul," "the joy that was set before him." He pants to reign in trustful, loving, human hearts ; to be the "immortal, invisible King" of a kingdom "not of this world," a kingdom to be "entered" by being "converted" and "becoming as little children," a kingdom of "righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

But would such a world as he now looks forth upon ever willingly accept such a religion and heart-rule as his ? From ocean to ocean, from North to South, the earth was covered with delusions and deceits. Satan, Adam's tempter, had triumphed over the world of men. He was keeping his "palace," as "a strong man, armed." He had covered the earth with his strongholds ; and false religions, false philosophies, false science, and false despotic governments overshadowed the nations, as with the deep gloom and darkness of a world-wide forest. Every thing is false and wrong. Even Jehovah's only temple upon earth has become "a house of merchandise" and "den of thieves." And hence, to the eye of Jesus, the world was bristling with foreseen and deadly opposition to the religion and kingdom which he had

undertaken to establish. Because he brought men "the truth," they "would not believe." Because he died for them, they would all the more "be offended in him." His success and triumph had, indeed, been foretold and promised. Often had he read the glowing predictions of David and Isaiah and all the prophets; and the Father had commanded him to "gird on his sword" and to ride forth "prosperously." But now is his hour of temptation. The obstacles and opposition, the earthliness and aversion of mankind, and the wiles and enmity and power of Satan,—what man or angel, standing then on that mountain, would not have pronounced them invincible? The tempted Christ foreknew that "his own" nation would meet with mockery and scorn his high claim to be their King; and that they would be but the choir-leaders of the whole Gentile, persecuting world crying "Crucify him, crucify him! we have no king but Cæsar!" And the question and burden of his soul concerned the prospect and possibility of his coveted world-rule, and of some practicable modification of his appointed plan and tactics. Could he not, somehow, gain an easier and speedier empire over self-surrendering human souls? True, there was "the promise of the Father," and there were the Father's orders concerning the campaign and conquest. And the truth of

God and the Spirit of God were, indeed, the conquering forces of his kingdom, as they were to be the reigning powers, and (in the absence of the ascended King) for ever to have the sovereignty in his promised earthly empire. But could he ever win his kingdom so? Force, and "carnal weapons," and all craft were out of the question. But could he not concede something to men's tastes and wishes and ideas? Could he not accommodate his methods and his manifestation of himself as King to mankind's love of ease and worldly glory and display? Could he secularize more or less his modes of conquest and his own kingship, and so attract and win the world of men? The tempter at his side was the acknowledged *de facto* "prince of this world," who now suggests a compromise. Foiled in his attempt to betray the Son of God into distrust or disobedience, he will now boldly tempt him, as he did Adam, to disloyalty. Repulsed both on the right and left of Christ's defences, he will in desperation strike his final blow at the centre, involving thus and overwhelming both the wings. And, while there is passing before the mind of Jesus a vision of "all the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them," Satan says: "All this power is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it. I only ask of you that you accept and hold it as my acknowl-

edged vassal. If thou wilt fall down and do homage to me, all shall be Thine." But again the tempted one fathomed "the depths of Satan;" and his kingly "Get thee behind me!" ended the long, momentous temptation of the wilderness. Thus Adam's successful adversary had for the first time failed. He had been foiled in his aim to turn aside this Son of God from the basis, law, and true allegiance of his prophetic, priestly, kingly Christhood.

V.

THE TEMPTATIONS OF CHRISTIANS AND OF CHRISTIANITY REPRESENTED BY CHRIST'S, AND IN SIMILAR ERAS.

ON the day of his new birth and adoption, every child of God receives "an unction from the Holy One," as Jesus did at his baptism; and hears, likewise, the Spirit's heavenly voice, witnessing, "Thou art My son." From this, the Jordan of his baptism unto Christ, the wilderness of his temptation is not far removed. It is his "high calling" to share even on earth, in some sense, the prophetic, priestly, and kingly work of his Lord. For in witnessings, in sufferings, and self-sacrifices, as well as in winning souls, each Christian is to have "fellowship" with Christ. And is it not a fact of exceeding interest, that, unlike as are the outward lives and the surroundings of believers in different ages or even in the same, their temptations, nevertheless, are "common to all," and common, too, to them with their Master and Lord? "Tempted in all points like as we are" settles this sympathy

and community of spiritual conflicts. And not only is every child of God, in whatever condition or times, assaulted by essentially the same temptations as was Christ in the wilderness, but it is wonderful how, in the ordinary experience of believers, these temptations take the same order. Moreover, the aim of all Satan's wiles against the Christian as such is the same as against Christ. It is to spoil his life-work, to paralyze or pervert him through distrust, to ensnare and wreck him through presumptuous self-pleasing, or to lead him captive through worldly conformities; and by any or all of these to render him good for nothing, or even damaging, to the real work of Christ in the world.

Accordingly, in the first stage of his life-temptation, the Christian finds himself assailed with "wilderness" trials. He is either harassed with earthly wants and cares and burdens, or he is pursued and pressed by spiritual anxieties, fears, and conflicts in his own heart, or he is disheartened and hindered in his work for souls by obstacles, oppositions, and discouragements. It is the tempter's opportunity to assault his *faith* in God and in his promises, to drive him from all earnest witnessing-work for Christ, and to seduce him (for the sake of supply or relief to himself, or even for larger success) into some sort of life and labor which will leave out direct, personal, soul-saving work. Mul-

titudes of believers never get beyond this stage. They are palsied all their life by lack of faith; and, like the doubting Israelites who turned back from Kadesh Barnea to wander all their days in the wilderness, they suffer and mourn, and write down their lives a failure, — albeit, “saved as by fire,” and entering at last the celestial Canaan.

But for all those whose steadfast faith triumphs and presses onward, there is waiting a “pinnacle” experience. Lifted out of their temporal wants and troubles, they stand now upon heights of comparative ease or of strange worldly prosperity. Or that wretched, restless warfare on the battle-field of their own souls has given place to the peace and joy of a spiritual victory. Or the fruitless fields, where amidst their tears they once seemed to toil in vain, have surprised them with abundant harvests of souls for the Master. They are now sitting, like David, on the palace-roof, successful and at ease. Or, with the recovered and flattered Hezekiah, they are rejoicing over their deliverances, honors, and wealth. But they are not out of danger. For now comes the mighty enticement to renounce the hard, lowly work of Christian self-sacrifice for a life of easy self-indulgence, or of self-pleasing display, — display whether of their marvellous money-making powers, or of their intellectual ability and acquirements, or even of their

spiritual gifts and successes. In a word, they are tempted, like Jesus on the "pinnacle," to "cast themselves down" from their high places of worldly prosperity or of Christian exaltation and success, — their light obscured or quenched it may be for ever, — like so many of the "Lucifers" of the Church from the dawn of Christianity even until now.

But for the Christian, who through grace has repelled, or at length struggled through, these two spiritual assaults, there remains the "mountain" temptation. Looking forth upon a world unsaved, longing for wide personal influence over men, and for power to draw them to Christ, he is assailed by the same third Satanic wile as was his Master. He is tempted to win the worldly to the service of Jesus by going over to their worldliness, — as Aaron at the foot of Sinai, that he might recall the Israelites, "set on mischief" and idolatry, to the worship of the God he loved, consented to fashion for them a "golden calf," and to connive at their heathenish rites and riotings.

But from this brief reference to personal Christian experience as re-producing the temptations of Jesus we turn to the history of Christianity itself. For Christ was Christianity embodied and perfect. Nor need it surprise us to find historical Christianity, genuine yet imperfect, assailed always by

one or another of the antagonisms and spiritual perils of its tempted founder.

On the day of Pentecost, the early Church received its Jordan "baptism," — the open recognition and endorsement of the Father, through the promised "outpouring" of the Spirit. And these Christians were called to enter at once upon a world-wide prophet-work, as "witnesses unto Christ." On that most memorable day "the kingdom of heaven," which Jesus and John the baptizer had been proclaiming as "at hand," was set up in this world,¹ the apostles receiving "power" through the Holy Ghost. And that "outpouring" was a telegram from the Heavens, announcing on the earth the investiture and crowning of Christ, the King. And the few feeble followers of the ascended Lord were anointed to go forth "unto the uttermost ends of the earth," "preaching," like Paul in Rome, "the Kingdom of God." But, as when Christ yearned over it from the "mountain" of his temptation, the whole world presented an unchanged front of hostility, scorn, and menace. In his own land a few hundreds had enthroned in their hearts the Saviour-King. But the outlying world, and mostly Judaism itself, were ready for a fierce and exterminating crusade against the witnesses and adherents of the Man of Nazareth.

¹ Acts i. 7, 8.

Into such world those men of Pentecost and their fellows were commanded to go forth. Is it strange if they found it the Quarantania of their temptation? Yet it is matter of interest and wonder that historical Christianity, in the careful survey and study of its first sixteen centuries, is found actually to reproduce, in long eras, the three-fold temptation of Christ's "forty days." The tempted founder represented his tempted Church. Genuine Christianity, as in it, encountered in the same world the same trials which in him it had met and triumphed over. And naturally enough those sixteen hundred years, down to the Reformation, divide themselves into marked historic periods, by their strong generic likeness to the three successive wilderness temptations of our Lord.

1. Those prophetic words of Jesus that "against my Church the gates of Hell shall not prevail" were suggestive of a common storm. But he had given them more distinct warnings. "Behold," he had said, "I send you forth as sheep among wolves. Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: It is enough for the servant that he be as his Lord." His Christianity was not sent forth among men as a poetic sentiment, an attractive form, a philosophic theory, or a quiescent, passive good-will to mankind. Nor was it, now, a faith and love and longing in souls leader-less and

without organization. Its captain was "invisible;" but its germ of an army, marshalled and moved onward by the Spirit and the Word of God, were a conquering force instinct with life and energy, in earnest mutual sympathy, ready for the greatest sacrifices, and full of courage and of confidence of victory. Furnished, too, with miraculous gifts and powers, it dared to unfurl the banner of uncompromising war against all the mighty paganisms, false philosophizings, and popular iniquity and ungodliness of mankind. Against such a religion the world's enmity soon of necessity broke forth. The "heathen raged." "The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers took council together." The Jewish people — the Sadducean or liberal party taking the lead¹ — led on the fierce crusade; and the wide Gentile world soon vied in the murderous assault. From the age of Nero and of the martyrdom of Paul, the mighty power of the Roman Empire was turned against the feeble followers of the crucified Nazarene. In Nero's bloody reign, when Christian men and women were hunted, seized, and tortured amid heartless derisions; through the fierce martyrdoms of Domitian; during the terrible era of the "gentle" Trajan, when they were required to worship the statue of the emperor and the popular idols of

¹ Acts iv. 1-3; v. 17, 18.

Rome and to curse the name of Jesus, and when to be proved a Christian was death; under Adrian and the mild Marcus Aurelius; all through the years when Antoninus Pius visited them with confiscations, banishment, imprisonment, and death; under Severus and Maximin; during that crisis of their sufferings when Decius Trajan sought to exterminate them; under Valerian, by whom men and women were scourged, slain with the sword, and cast into flames; through all that terrible death-struggle of the old Paganism of Rome, when Diocletian, determined to annihilate Christianity, forbade the worship of the Christians, pulled down their churches, burned their Bibles, deprived them of citizenship, and sent their pastors to prisons and chains; even to the times when Maximian strove to drive them all (men, women, children, and slaves) back into the old idolatries, — during all this long, weary period of more than two centuries and a half, with brief intervals of rest, the primitive Church was emphatically sharing that “wilderness” temptation of its Lord. And these fierce persecutions, whether by Gentiles or Jews, were specially aimed against the prophetic work of the early church. They were intended and employed to stifle even by death its testimony for Christ, and, if possible, to force it back into sanctioning and sharing the world’s idolatries,

impieties, and corruptions. "Swear, curse Christ, and I will set you free," said the Roman proconsul to the faithful old Polycarp.

And what earthly defence or refuge had these Christians now? Diviners and magicians, whose hope of gains was endangered, accused them before the magistrates. Heathen "craftsmen," anxious for the traffic by which they had their wealth, excited against them the fury of the populace. The pagan priesthoods enkindled the bigotry and selfish policy of the rulers. Philosophers mocked and turned away at their preaching of "Jesus and the resurrection." Statesmen denounced them as traitors, because they would not fall down to the emperor's image and to the gods of the State. And even historians branded them as "enemies of mankind," because they refused to participate in the corrupt pleasures and idolatries of heathenism. Nor did the law and civil government of Rome protect them. For Imperial Rome was thoroughly pagan. It knew nothing of the rights of conscience; and Paganism was the legalized religion of the State. "No man," said the Roman laws, "shall have separate gods for himself; and no man shall worship by himself new or foreign gods, unless they have been acknowledged publicly by the laws of the State." And to Christianity was never granted a place among the "allowed religions" of Pagan Rome.

Through all these fearful ages the Christian Church was, among all the nations, the only "prophet of the Highest," the "voice of one crying in the wilderness,"—a voice to be silenced by every cruel artifice of persecuting rage. By poverty; by confiscations and the "spoiling of their goods;" by banishments and every form of heathenish enmity; by reproaches, such that when drought, or flood, or fire, or famine befell any town or province of the Empire, it was charged to the anger of the gods against those vile and impious followers of Jesus, who were accounted "the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things;" by proscription and disfranchisement; and by lions and flames,—these Christians were tempted to cease their "witnessing" for Christ. And their "divers temptations" now were but those "tryings of their faith" to which the New Testament writings so specially allude.

But between this first temptation of the early Church and the first of the three temptations of Jesus there was the semblance, though not the substance, of a difference. In the latter, Christ and the tempter stood forth as the visible actors; while the world of mankind, as present to the thought and heart of Jesus and as demanding for itself only a "bread-making" prophet, was in the background, invisible. But in this wilderness temptation of

the early centuries the persecuting world represented its "prince;" and Christ was assailed only in his followers. Two armies and two hostile kingdoms stood in the foreground, the one made up of "the children of disobedience" and the other of Christ's loyal, loving volunteers; the one willingly ruled by their eternal rightful King, and the other the "principality" of Satan; the one what Jesus called "my church," and the other what he styled "the world." And, be it noted, those votaries of the world, who from their idol were named "the world," made in those dark, sad centuries no pretence or profession of liberality or friendliness towards Christ and Christianity. They resisted and persecuted both it and him with relentless, shameless hostility; and the world played toward the Church the rôle of an open and undisguised persecutor, sending to death several millions of those unresisting Christians.

2. The attempt to root out Christianity by violence had at length become an acknowledged failure. The Church, trusting to "the sword of the Spirit" and the Father's "promise" of "the Comforter," had stood steadfast; and, with none of the accessories and aid of art, architecture, or worldly splendor, it had triumphed. And the Christians, having persisted in their testimony in the face of proscription and martyrdom, had mul-

tiplied in numbers, until even State policy forbade their further persecution. And now "the world" changes its rôle. The tempter reverses his tactics. No longer like "a roaring lion seeking whom it may devour," the State (representing the heathenized, ungodly masses of society) will now play the part of a patronizing ally. Scarcely foreseeing the terrible results of its own strategy, and impelled, it may be, by the mere instinct of self-preservation, the Paganism which still leavened and ruled the Empire will now try the power of munificence and friendliness; and will seduce and bend, by its influence and prestige, the Christianity which open hostility could not annihilate. As Charles Kingsley suggests, the Empire was now about to make the Christian Church its "stipendiary slave-official, to be pampered when obedient, and scourged when she dared assert a free will of her own."

Sudden, like the transition of the tempted Christ from the wilderness to the pinnacle, was the passing of the Church of the fourth century out from under the murderous enmity of Maximian into the favor and alliance of the victorious Constantine. No longer trembling in their chains at the roar of the famished lions, nor shuddering at the crackling of the enkindled flames, the Christians receive again their confiscated estates and their sanctuaries. Houses of worship are built for them. Their

clergy are exempted from taxation. Legacies to the Church are legalized. And the Church itself, so lately doomed to extermination, basks in the smile of the great emperor and his court. For the son of Constantius Chlorus and Helena inherits the friendliness of his parents toward the Christians; and having, under the banner of the Cross and on the banks of the Tiber, overcome his last rival, he has spread over them the shield of his mighty protection. Nay, more; from the shore of the Bosphorus, sole ruler of the civilized world, he has declared himself their champion and patron, and made the Church the ward and favorite of the State. Nor was this a transient gleam of sunshine. Constantine's patronage of the Church was continued, with little interruption, under his successors, and was for hundreds of years imitated by Charlemagne and the Frankish princes. The old paganisms were disgraced and discarded; their temples were destroyed, their riches were confiscated, and the ancient heathen worship was repressed by civil penalties. Meanwhile, the Christian churches, clergy, and cloisters fattened more and more upon the favor and largesses of the State. Bishops became feudal lords; and arch-bishops, metropolitans, patriarchs, and at length pontiffs assumed the grandeur of princes. For State patronage had lifted the lately famishing Church of Christ and had set it on

the "pinnacle of the temple," — high above all other forms of faith in the world, supreme in the realm of religions.

The new temptation was not, like the former, a direct assault upon the prophet-work of Christianity. It was rather an insidious and most tempting attack upon the perpetual priestly service of all Christ's followers. For it is theirs to be "partakers of the afflictions of the Gospel," to "know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings," to "deny themselves and take up their cross and follow" their self-sacrificing Lord; and since he has finished the suffering needful to the world's redemption, it belongs to them to "fill up that which is behind of his afflictions" in the work of the world's evangelization, until his own gospel is preached and exemplified "to every creature." But how the need for all such work seemed lifted now from the shoulders of the Christians of these times! The State had undertaken to fight their battles, to put down their enemies, and to supply more or less their church-needs. And what opportunities were opened to them for ease and self-indulgence! And to please their generous powerful patrons, what temptations now arose, age after age, to imitate the grandeurs, pleasures, and worldly display of the great emperors and their voluptuous courts! "Cast thyself down" was the perpetual enticement of the

times and the ceaseless suggestion of the tempter to the Church; and naturally it was backed by the same misapplied promise: "He shall give his angels charge" over His Church, and "the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."

The results of this temptation we know. Consenting to become the beneficiary of a corrupt State, and of a court instinct with the life and spirit of the worldly heathenish world, the Church of the Crucified One became its satellite and servile imitator. Unchanged pagans, driven by the frowns of the State from their outward heathen forms of worship, were drawn by the hope of emolument and honor toward a profession of Christianity. Idolaters, carrying with them their old ideas and preferences, entered the sacred office, and rose to the highest dignities of the Christian Church; so that Eusebius, the historian, found occasion to lament the "indescribable hypocrisy" among professors of Christianity, even in the age of Constantine. "In the fifth century," says Macaulay, "Christianity had conquered Paganism, and Paganism had corrupted Christianity. The rites of the Pantheon had passed into her worship, and the subtleties of the Academy into her creed." Pagan philosophy, especially Platonism, with its absurd ideas of matter as the cause of sin, of "demons" as helping to rule this world, and of knowledge as

to be gained through contemplative abstraction, leavened the thinking of the Church. Instead of the old and unpopular pagan idolatry, there gradually came in the worship of martyrs, of saints, and of the Virgin Mary, and at length of pictures, images, and relics. Meanwhile, the government of the Church, also, was assimilating itself more and more to the overshadowing, patronizing despotism of the State; until, at length, there was developed Romanism, — a system which (apart from the truth it retains) is largely a compound of Paganism, Platonism, and despotism. Moreover, the clergy and laity of these ages “cast themselves down,” more and more, into shameless wickedness, hard to be believed and yet historic; and, keeping pace with this, was the increasing spirit of idle churchly and priestly display. Splendid clerical vestments, magnificent rites and shows, processions and pilgrimages, and a church-architecture grand and gorgeously adorned and vying in magnificence with the old temples of heathenism, took the place of the simple service and plain houses of worship of the early Christian ages. Even the self-denials and asceticisms of the Church became empty ostentation; and men were stirred to wonder by the showy and startling austerities, and by the voluntary pauperism and self-tortures and even suicides of Christians. Added to all these was that very

form of useless display to which Satan tempted Jesus on the pinnacle; namely, show-miracles, — as useless as the weeping picture of the Madonna, or as the liquefied blood of St. Januarius. And yet Hildebrand taught, — as if in the spirit of the tempter's quotation of the Bible, — “that the Romish Church never erred; nor will it, according to the Scriptures, ever err.”

3. A new era of temptation opened upon the mediæval Church about the eleventh century. The Church of the Roman Pontiffs, with all its degeneracy, was still a church of Jesus Christ. It included much of the sincere piety of the times, although outside of its communion and repudiating its pretensions were other Christians, — Greek, Nestorian, and Waldensian. In the two former temptations of Christianity “the world” had assailed it, first as its open furious persecutor, and next as its seducing false friend and ally. Now, the worldly class had inundated the Church. They were “not all Israel that were of Israel;” but, as in the days of declining Judaism, the greater part were Christians “outwardly,” whose minds and hearts were on “earthly things.” And the spirit of the world, having already so far triumphed over the Church, will assail it once more, at a great disadvantage and by a new artifice. It will take on the air of a master; and will offer to the longing Church the

world-empire, upon the condition of voluntary and utter vassalage. The era of this temptation dates from the age when in the Papal Church there was developed the spirit and passion of world-conquest. This seems to have been about the time of Hildebrand's ascendancy, and of his inauguration as Pope Gregory VII. The subjection of the whole world to the Roman Pontiffs was an idea which haunted his aspiring mind. All kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them were to be made fiefs of the Papacy; and the policy of kings and princes, and the interests of all mankind, were to be supervised and ruled over by a body of Papal clergy, assembling annually on the banks of the Tiber. It was a magnificent vision of all nations subjected to Roman ecclesiastics, and to the Popes as "vicegerents of Christ." They were to dispose not only of Church revenues and dignities, but also of crowns and thrones, and empires and national exchequers, after their own pleasure and for the interests of their Christianity. Nor from the time of Hildebrand onward did this passion ever cease to leaven the policy and fire the minds of the clergy, and more or less of the laity, of the Church of Rome. It was then that the mediæval Church went up into a "high mountain," and saw in vision that for which it so yearned. And Satan said to its representative men and leaders, as once to the

tempted Son of God, "If thou, therefore, wilt worship me, all shall be thine." If it would make its dominion a mere worldly kingdom, and if it would get its dominion by means and methods such as the tempter and the world should dictate and approve, then it should receive the universal empire it so longed for, — a gift bestowed by "the prince of this world" upon his willing vassal.

To gain the rule of the whole world, four things needed to be done. The outlying heathen tribes must be Christianized; secular princes and their policy must be brought under the will of the priesthood; vast sums of money must be gathered into the treasury of the Church; and all internal protests and opposition must be put down. And while for all right ends there were methods Christlike and Scriptural, there were also means Satanic, or worldly. And the temptation of the age lay in the mighty inducement presented to the Christianity of the times to disparage and refuse the former, and to choose and use the latter. The methods actually adopted by the tempted Church of the Pontiffs are now matters of history.

In the first place, all about the confines of Christendom lay unevangelized tribes and nations, — the Moslems in Spain and in Palestine, and the heathen along the shores of the Baltic. To make Christians of these Pagans the Church un-

sheathed the secular sword; and the stubborn Prussians were converted only after a bloody struggle, continued through half a century. Christian armies were sent to overwhelm the Mahometans of the Spanish peninsula; and hordes of Crusaders, age after age, were sent to drench with blood the birth-land of the "Prince of Peace." Meanwhile, to subdue and control the secular powers of Christendom, the Papal leaders commissioned, not truth-telling men like Nathan and Daniel, John the Baptist and Paul, but wily "confessors," cunning clerical diplomats, the subtle craft of Dominicans and Franciscans, and at last the matchless duplicity and deceit of the Jesuits. The Church entered the arena of diplomacy as one among the world-kingdoms of the earth. Moreover, to raise the immense financial supplies required for their purposes, the hierarchy turned utterly away from the methods of primitive Christianity. They made merchandise of church offices, dignities, and benefices. They sold prayers and masses. They made gain out of the sympathies and affections of the living, by delivering the souls of their dead from purgatorial torment for gold. They encouraged a wide-spread and lucrative trade in the so-called bones and relics of saints and martyrs. They conducted with great success a spiritual bank whose capital stock was the merits of Christ and

the surplus merits of the saints, transferring these to living sinners for money paid or for service rendered. And the "indulgences" so freely sold, together with the gifts of dying sinners to ease their consciences and free their souls from Purgatory, swelled the incomes of the pontiffs and priesthood. Bernard of Clugni, the monastic poet of the twelfth century, sang not without reason, —

"In holy Rome the only power is gold,
There all is bought, there everything is sold."

But a serious and increasing barrier lay in the way of the world-wide triumph of Papal Christianity. Protesting voices were boldly lifted up against the wrongs, corruptions, and errors of the Church of Rome. These voices waxed louder and louder. In northern Italy and southern France, in Bohemia, Britain, and Germany, both within and without the Church, men cried out for reform. These men, — Waldenses, Paulicians, Albigenses, Lollards, Cathari, etc., — although among them were some crazed enthusiasts, some maddened fanatics, and perhaps some even worse than these, yet included among them the noblest, manliest, and most Christian souls of all these ages: men like Arnold of Brescia, Wickliffe, Huss, and Savonarola, whose offence was that they set the Word of God above the authority of pontiffs. When the Saviour

of the world and his surviving apostles met with opposition or blasphemy or suffering at the hands of men, they never "reviled again nor threatened," nor "called down fire from heaven;" but taught that Christianity had come not "to destroy men's lives, but to save them." But how did the Romish hierarchy treat their opposers and accusers? They taught Christendom the doctrine and the practice of persecution for opinion's sake. They silenced opposition by violence and rage. They persuaded the secular powers of Europe to make so-called "heresy" a crime, and through the civil magistrates to punish it with fire and sword. They pursued it most relentlessly with excommunications, confiscations, banishments, desolating wars, violated covenants, and wholesale massacres. They set at work against it the infernal machinery of the Inquisition, with its espionage and mock-trials, and systematized cruelty and torture. They made themselves "drunk with the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus," putting to death during these ages more millions of them than Paganism had sacrificed during the first three Christian centuries. And all this time, in order that the Papal Church might hold and enlarge its power over men's minds, it continued to impress and beguile them with religious pomps and shows, and with all the sensuous witchery of architecture, art, and music; while the monks and priests of the

thirteenth century amused them with the revived wonders of the theatre.

Thus, from the era when Hildebrand and his contemporaries from their high mount of vision seemed to see the world at the feet of the Romish priests and pontiffs, the tempted Papal Church sought the empire of the earth by methods in part worldly, and in part Satanic. It combined sensuous fascinations and attractions with subtleties, deceits, and cruelties worthy of the Evil One. And as, when the Jewish Church crucified Christ and set itself to destroy his followers, "the kingdom of God was taken from it and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof;" so and for the same reasons, when the Church of Rome, which had been degenerating and secularizing itself for centuries, "cast itself down" to be Satan's willing vassal for the sake of gaining universal dominion; and when it had become the relentless, systematic persecutor of Christ in his true disciples, and had driven them out from its communion by excommunications, martyrdoms, and massacres,—then, though still including within it some godly souls (as does, perhaps, every other nominally Christian communion, and even the outside world itself), the "kingdom was taken from it" also, and it became no longer a church of Christ, but the world-wide enemy of true Christianity, antichristian, if not "the antichrist."

VI.

CHRISTIANITY IN THE NEW WORLD A NEW DEVELOPMENT.—ITS FIRST AND SECOND TEMPTATIONS.

THE Creator planned this world-home of man in the interest of his freest development. Instead of grouping all its arable acres into one grand broad area, flanked on one side by the needful mountains and on the other by the necessary breadth of desert, and all enclosed by one vast, collected ocean, He partitioned it. By means of stormy straits and seas, by chains of towering mountains, by wide arid wastes, and by pathless oceans, he barred forever the conquering spread of one world-wide despotism, secular or religious. He divided the kingdom of wrong and falsehood against itself, and opened refuges,—like Greece, Switzerland, and Britain,—for freedom and for faith. Such an asylum, across the broad and terrible Atlantic, awaited the free Christian souls who in the seventeenth century were so cruelly oppressed by Papal and prelatical persecutions in Europe. Between the Alleghanies and the ocean

lay "a good land," — a land "of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that sprung out of valleys and hills, — a land of wheat and barley and vines, and whose stones were iron;" a second Canaan, the pre-destinated home of chosen men and women, who were to be the Abraham of a new era. Of these, England drove forth the Puritans, chief workmen upon the foundations of Christianity and Freedom in the New World. English Quakers; Welsh, Scotch, and Scotch-Irish Presbyterians; Huguenots, from a land where their worship was prohibited, their estates confiscated, their children torn from them, their pastors gibbeted or burned, the rights of citizens denied them, and their emigration forbidden; Germans, fleeing from the smoking villages of their Rhine-land; Hollanders; Scandinavians, stirred by the enthusiasm of the great Gustavus for Christian liberty; Bohemians, inheriting the faith of John Huss and of Jerome of Prague; Moravians from Herrnhut; a few hundred refugees from poor priest-ridden Poland; and a small representative band of the old Waldensian Church from Piedmont, — emigrants, indeed, from every European country where Protestantism had survived persecution, massacre, and the Inquisition, came to the dedication of this new continent to Freedom and to Christ. They were not all genuine believers, nor all pure and virtuous men. But they

were nearly all Protestants. And "by far the greater part of them were simple Christians,"¹ — men whose rule of faith and life was the Bible, and whose emigration to the New World was prompted or leavened by love for Christianity and liberty.

1. To these Christian men and brave women who were to be the founders of the nation, the hill-sides and shores and valleys of the Atlantic slope, from Maine to Georgia, were the Quarantania desert of their first temptation. It was, indeed, by nominally Christian governments and churches, and by the persecuting rage of these, that they had been driven forth from father-land and home. But it was "the spirit of the world" that did it. "The world," now so largely inside the Church and taking on the name and forms of Christianity, was again, as in the early centuries, playing the rôle of persecutor, and caused them this fiery trial of their literally "wilderness" temptation. They had come to the wilds of America as the pioneers of a grand providential movement, which they but dimly understood. They had come to be the founders of a Christian State whose fundamental law was to be liberty, and of a religion whose faith should be the Bible, and its only head and king the Christ. Their errand was religious

¹ Baird's Religion in America.

freedom, the establishment of a pure Christianity, the evangelizing of the native heathen, and the advancement of Christ's everlasting kingdom. "Called to go out into a country which they should afterward receive for an inheritance, they obeyed through faith." But their trust was to be sorely tested. Their arduous toils, the hardships of their wilderness life, poverty and famine, sickness and loss of friends, the terror and cruelties of their savage merciless foes from Maine to Georgia, — these were among the elements in their first temptation. It was, like their Lord's, a trial of faith. And, like him, they were now tempted to substitute "bread-making" for their true intended prophet-work as Christians. With so much upon their hands to be done, pressed to make provision for the temporal needs and safety of their families, called to build at once homes and civil governments, and to do all this amid sickness and peril and so far from relief and supply, the foundations of their trust in God's help and promises were assailed by a pressure severe and perilous. Could they now build sanctuaries and Christian schools? Could they maintain Christian teachers and sustain Christian worship? Could they "seek first the kingdom of God," under such a press of secular toils and wants and dangers? Like the weary Israelites at Kadesh Barnea, they were under

a great temptation to unbelief, and to a cowardly turning-back from their grand Christian errands, — tempted, through a supreme devotion of their energies to earthly needs and enterprises, to “command the stones of their wilderness to be made bread.” But their faith proved genuine and steadfast. They rested upon the promises of God; and, amid privations and sufferings over which their children weep and wonder, they laid the foundations of Christianity, education, and liberty in the New World.

2. The age of Constantine had entailed upon Europe the alliance of Church and State. To the churches of the Reformation it had come as an heirloom, and even American Christianity, free as it was, was at first in bondage to this idea. Most of the colonial governments of New England, and of Virginia likewise, assumed from the beginning the patronage of the Church. And before the era of our national independence, in all the colonies except Rhode Island and Pennsylvania, the State lent its aid to one or other of the two leading denominations, — to Congregationalism within New England, and to Episcopacy west and south of the Hudson. And yet, for the first century at least, society and the Churches were alike so imperilled and impoverished that the patronage of the civil power could not lift the Church to any very dan-

gerous heights. But gradually, as spring overmasters the desolation of winter, prosperity came; and, moreover, colonial society was now dominated by an irreligious and worldly majority. Hence, the two favored churches of the colonies could not but feel the influence of their State-alliance. They were by no means borne up to the same dizzy heights to which the great Constantine and later emperors had for centuries raised the Church of their times. But there were the same Siren voices, — less pronounced, indeed, — luring them, as they were borne on the lap of the State, into similar ease, self-indulgence, and conformity to the world. They were under the shadow of the same influences which have for ages rested upon the State-churches of Britain and Continental Europe. During this period the State-power in nearly all New England imposed taxes upon all for the benefit and support of the Congregational Church, — building and repairing its houses of worship, sustaining its pastors, and meeting its current expenses. In several of the New England colonies only church-members could hold any civil office or exercise the elective franchise. In Virginia much the same special favor was accorded to Episcopacy. One of the colonial governments became the champion of religion, and visited infidelity with legal inflictions; and two of them

sought to compel attendance upon the Sabbath assemblies by civil penalties.

And this era repeated that old "pinnacle" temptation of the mediæval Church. Its influence was seen in the pressure of unconverted men for admission to the churches of New England, as a means to civil office and the civil franchise. It was seen also in the adoption by the churches of the "half-way covenant;" in the general practice of receiving moral persons, though confessedly not Christians at heart, into full church fellowship; and in the legal control acquired by the majority of tax-payers over the property and acts of the Christian societies. And, more or less widely, the New England churches did "cast themselves down." Their Christianity was corrupted, and the morals of society at large suffered a great decline. In some of the Southern colonies the results were still more disastrous. Pastors utterly irreligious and unworthy were held in office by colonial governors, until in Virginia the legislature was constrained to take notice of the immorality of the clergy.

But against the evils of this era the standard of God was lifted by such earnest heroic souls as Edwards, Finley, the Tennents, Davies, the Wesleys, and Whitefield. The Spirit was poured out upon these tempted colonial churches. Revivals of re-

ligion, wide-spread and powerful, brought back the beauty and life of a spiritual summer to the land. The "great awakening," about the middle of the eighteenth century, aroused the churches, and saved them from fatally "tempting the Lord their God." After the colonies became an independent nation the State-church system was gradually abolished; and, at the opening of the present century, the mass of the Evangelical churches of the country stood forth the freest group of churches on the earth, self-supporting and independent of the State, full of youthful energy and hope, and full of promise for the world,—but awaiting yet the subtlest and severest trial of their genuine Christianity.

VII.

AMERICAN CHRISTIANITY, — ITS PRESENT AGE- TEMPTATION.

TWO centuries had now gone by since the settlement at Jamestown and the landing on Plymouth Rock. All this while American Christians had been propagating the seeds and scions of religion and republicanism in their own wide, Heaven-chosen field, while not wholly neglecting the pagan aborigines of the continent. At the beginning of this century the churches of Massachusetts and Connecticut had sent godly men to carry the gospel to the West of that day; that is, to the western wilds of the present State of New York. It was doubtless true that in the two thousand churches of the land, and around myriads of family altars, the petition, "Thy kingdom come," had borne upward the yearnings of unnumbered Christian hearts for the unevangelized nations of the earth. But for the wide world, outside of their own adopted land, nothing yet had actually been done. Their plans, and energies,

and gifts had been engrossed in their own vast and varied home-work; and the nation seemed rooted in Protestantism and liberty, — a robust infant Republic and a vigorous Evangelical Church standing side by side, each mostly untrammelled and independent in its own sphere. The baleful influences of the French Revolution and of its atheism had been checked, and very few of the Roman Catholics of Europe had as yet emigrated to the New World.

And will any one account it strange that a *renaissance* of Christianity — so like that of revived and purified Judaism, when it was sent back, amidst tears and shoutings and without its idols, from the land of its captivity to possess its re-chosen home — should be beset by snares such as befell the Christianity of the earlier ages, and such as assailed the tempted Christ? The generations of mankind oscillate, like a pendulum; and maladies, moral and physical, re-appear as epidemics upon the return of like conditions and circumstances.

The opening of the nineteenth century found the whole population (except about a quarter of a million) east of the meridian of Pittsburg. And it found dawning upon the nation a new era of increase and expansion. Suddenly, there burst forth a wide-spread enthusiasm for Western emi-

gration. Neither the mountain barriers, nor the lack of pathways of travel, nor the hardships of the wilderness, nor the dread of treacherous savages could restrain it. Swelling into a mighty flood the tide broke over the Alleghanies, and swept through the morasses, and cut for itself channels into the great central valley of the continent. And foreign immigration, meanwhile, took on kindred proportions and a new type. Roman Catholic Europe now poured upon our shores increasing myriads of its ignorant and mis-educated peoples. Tidings of the country's resources and prosperity reached and attracted the remotest lands. The enlarged national area was permeated and bound together by iron railways. And the nation, sending out its branches and taking new root, became at length a vast Banyan-tree, over-stretching the continent; and pagan Asiatics, and many-tongued Europeans sat down, together with millions of liberated Africans, under its welcome shadow.

But during these new and mighty movements and changes had American Christianity continued to be monopolized by the work upon its own broadening home-field; or was it stirred to aims and aspirations higher and wider even than those which fired the heart of the nation? Around a hay-stack in Western New England a few ardent

Heaven-turned souls had heard, like the shepherds of Bethlehem, a new message (already heard, indeed, on the other side of the sea), — the birth-song, not of the world's Saviour, but of the world itself. It was that message, forever reverberating yet so long unheard, which was first spoken upon a mountain in Galilee, "Go ye, and evangelize all nations!" And blended with it were cries from India and Burmah, and the islands of the sea, saying, "Come over and help us!" Newell, Judson, Hall, and their comrades had led the way up to heights from which they could see across the world. Others, — ministers and laymen, parents and children, sons and daughters, — in increasing numbers began to hear those same two voices of call and of command; until at length the evangelical churches of the land, of almost every name, marched up, well-nigh abreast, to the summit of "an exceeding high mountain," where, like their tempted Lord, they also saw "all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them." And here their hearts swelled, in imperfect sympathy with Christ's, for the willing subjection of all nations to the one Saviour-king. The era of American Missions had fairly dawned. Within half a century, — from 1810, the date of the organization of the American Board of Foreign Missions, to 1860, the birth-year of the Woman's Union Missionary

Society, — there came into being evangelizing agencies of every conceivable kind, and meeting every urgent need. It was a wonderful development of Christian thought and energy. It included societies for home and foreign missions, for educational work, for Sunday-school instruction, for printing and sending abroad Bibles, tracts, etc., for Christianizing natives and foreigners in our own land, and for reaching Jews and pagans, man and woman, all over the Christless world. It was, in the history of American Christianity, the opening of the era of kingdom-getting and of world-conquest for Christ. And in the same given circumstances there must needs come to Christianity the same temptations. American Christians, on their elevated stand-point of world-wide vision and Christlike aspiration, must be assailed by the same Satanic strategy which beset mediæval Christianity from the age of Hildebrand onward, and which sought to compass the ruin of Christ on the "high mountain." And lest Satan should "get an advantage of us" through our ignorance of his "devices;" and if it be that the temptation of the mountain is in fact the Age-temptation of this era of Missions and aspirations and conquests, — then are we not all, soldiers and leaders, called to halt and make a reconnoissance, in order to understand the present wile

of our arch-enemy? And are there not visible suggestive tokens, scattered over our whole home-field? And may not individual Christian experience, the history of mediæval Christianity, and our Saviour's own "mountain" enticement light us to such an understanding of the special age-perils of the Evangelical Christians and churches of our land?

The temptation of the times pertains directly to *the methods* for gaining for Christianity the coveted "kingdom." Ostensibly it does not aim to change the *nature* of this kingdom, nor does it formally attack either the prophet-work or the priestly-work of the Church. Directly it appeals to the aspiration of Christians for empire over society, and over mankind. It seems to address itself to their very love for Christ and for the souls of men. And it commends itself as proposing a mode of gaining this kingdom that is peaceable, easy, and speedy, although unknown to Christ or to the Bible.

Nor is this temptation conducted and managed by Satan, in his own proper person. Only to Adam and to Christ has he come as the visible agent in their moral trial. The temptations of Adam's seed are mainly through the material world, represented to him by that "tree" of his garden; and the moral dangers of the Church

have ever come mostly from the human world,—the lovers and idolizers of earthly things,—the invisible, actual tempter (as we have seen) of Christ in the wilderness. Of these, Satan was recognized even by Jesus as the *de facto* “prince.” Through these he acts. A cunning fowler, he uses his captives as decoys. A wily huntsman, he stalks for game under the disguise of his already captured victims. Whether he assails Christianity as a merciless persecutor, or as a seducing corrupting patron and ally,—as in the first two historic temptations, both of the Primitive and the American Church,—it is always “the world” (the class who are ruled by the spirit of this world) that is his visible agent. And when, too, the arch-tempter assumes the rôle of the actual master of the situation, and dictates to the tempted Church the only possible terms of its winning the Christ-kingdom,—then, also, it is again the worldly, Christless majority that are the visible agents in the transaction.

And just here lies, in no small part, the subtle deceit and power of this third tempting wile. The world takes toward the Church—not with conscious united plan and purpose, perhaps, but under the law of human nature’s common and instinctive impulses—certain diplomatic attitudes and strategical positions; and these, we cannot

but notice, are the very same that were assumed by the world's "prince" toward the tempted Christ upon the "mountain." And the first of these is the assumption of a conceded and invincible mastery over society and over the world-field; so that no religion can win universal dominion but with its consent, and so that only by its favor can even the divine system of Christianity attain the triumph it so longs for. "The kingdom is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will, I give it." It is the tone of the wily commandant of a beleaguered and trembling fortress who affects to account it impregnable, or of the leader of a consciously mastered army, who in bravado will yet make his own terms with the eager and confident assailants. Moreover, there is the assumption and pretence of a certain turn of friendliness toward Christianity, shown in a readiness—upon certain conditions, indeed—to "give it the kingdom." The world will give up its old, historic, persecuting rage against the religion of the crucified, and will also henceforth cease trying to seduce and corrupt it by State-patronage and control. And it will now even voluntarily yield to the Christian faith the coveted mastery over society, demanding of the Church only this one thing, namely, "Make your Christianity in its manifestations and its methods such as will please us; and

then we will accept it, and will assure, by our help and favor, its triumph at home and abroad." Or, translated into the familiar words of the arch-tempter to Christ, "Fall down and do homage to me, and all shall be thine." In short, the demand is that the Christianity of the age shall accept its coveted and promised ascendancy as a "gift" and grant from the confessedly unconverted and worldly mass of society,—receiving it and holding it as a vassal holds property under his lord.

Into this age-snare there enter a number of distinct elements. It always addresses itself as to a weak and timorous faith. "The actual and exact Christianity of Jesus and the Scriptures," it says, "has never yet in these eighteen centuries conquered the world. Its history has been a record of relapses, reverses, and contentions; and, by the methods of Jesus Christ and the Bible, it is impossible you should ever win society and mankind." It comprises, too, a perpetual appeal to that human love of ease, natural and powerful even among Christians. "This warfare," it says to peace-loving, ease-loving disciples, "has been long, wearisome, and terrible, and you have gained ground slowly even with all your self-denials and toils and conflicts. If the Church would but make sure of popular favor and the world's help, how

easy and speedy then would be its victory!" And the one aim of the tempting world's tactics, the characteristic point and pressure of this age-temptation, is a voluntary modification by Christians themselves of the Christianity of the times, so as to make it suit the taste and will of society's worldly and powerful majority, who are ready to take on themselves the name and forms of a Christianity such as pleases them. "You can never convert me so," said a Sunday-school boy, roused and disturbed by some alarming word of God; "I want to hear about the love of Jesus." "You may cure me and welcome," consents the sick world, "but I must choose my own medicines and regimen." "Christianity can conquer us at any time and easily," is the age-tone of respectable society, "only we must dictate the weapons and tactics of the victory, and, indeed, the style of the Christianity to which we will surrender." And, moreover, the power and peril of this age-wile spring largely out of an idea popularized in our literature and pervading the atmosphere of society like a spiritual malaria,—that "the world," as the Saviour styled it, has not only altered its dress and tone, and abandoned its old heathenish ideas and worships, and modified its treatment of Christianity, but is actually changed at heart; that it no longer "hates" Christ and his disciples, as he

once said it did, but only hates certain misconceptions and misrepresentations of him and of his religion; and that if these could only be removed, it would accept the religion of the New Testament. Thus in an article upon "Christianity and Free Thought," in one of our best monthly magazines, the writer expresses himself as follows: "The contrast between the Church and the world in the earliest centuries was such as our society has no parallel or analogy for. It is an utter perversion of language that the terms denoting the mutual hostility of that period are sometimes applied to the thin and almost invisible distinction which church-membership implies in our modern society." But if in fact human nature be essentially unchanged and unchangeable save by the grace of God, and if genuine Christianity, however it may be better understood, is in itself for ever "the same" like its Author, then may we not find a juster explanation of the world's new friendliness? "If there be any thing," writes Max Müller, "which a comparative study of religions places in the clearest light, it is the decay to which every religion is exposed. It is seldom borne in mind," he continues, "that without a constant return to its fountain-head every religion, even the most perfect, — nay, the most perfect on account of its very perfection more than the others, — suf-

fers from its contact with the world, as the purest air suffers from the very fact of being breathed."

Turning now to *specific forms* of the temptation of the times, we may note three at least which specially mark the era, so wide-spread are they among the churches of our land, and so directly connected with the work of Christian kingdom-gaining. One of these pertains to the best methods for securing Christian influence. Of so-called Christian influence there are two distinct kinds. The one kind draws men away from a life of selfish worldliness toward the Christ and the Christianity of the Bible. It carries men's judgment, it commends itself to their consciences, and it constrains them to believe that Christianity is something supernatural and from God, while it allures them toward the excellency and joy of a genuinely religious life. This is really *Christian* influence. The other kind is such as is oftentimes won by individuals fond of popularity, and by societies,—social, literary, and political. It merely draws men toward the professedly Christian individual, or toward the particular church or organization, and not necessarily at all towards Christ, but often away from him. This is counterfeit Christian influence, and is of course utterly false and deceptive. And the burden of this special form of the age-temptation lies in enticing our

American Christianity unwittingly to seek the counterfeit rather than the genuine, by letting "the world" dictate how Christian influence shall be won. "Fall down and worship me, and all shall be thine." Genuine Christian attractiveness and power come of course to Christ's disciples through their real and visible conformity to his life, and are measured by that conformity,—a method hard to nature, and therefore unwelcome. On the other hand, the counterfeit influence lies in the direction of our natural inclinations; and it is best gained through an easy, self-indulgent, self-pleasing conformity to the world; that is, through conforming to the world as the tempted Jesus himself did not and never would. The world has never loved a Christlike Christianity. It has sought by every sort of strategy to bring Christianity back and down to its own level. Those who "are not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world," it has always ostracized. Their lives disquiet and offend the world, though approved and justified in men's consciences. To bring these Christians back to the worship of its favorite idols,—whether of Mammon, Minerva, Fortuna, Juno, or any other or grosser popular divinities in the world's pantheon,—it has tried, first, compulsion and force in hundreds of historic persecutions; then the seductive, corrupting power of State pat-

ronage; and lastly, the bribe of the conditional "gift" of the world-kingdom. Jesus never sought influence over men through conformity to their earthliness. Compassionate, tender, kind, unbigoated, and in the true sense liberal as he was, he never drew men to him by sharing or sanctioning their self-indulgent, selfish love of earthly things. Nor did he ever seek favor or power with men through materialistic shows and grandeurs. For his influence he never depended on externals; and yet who of human kind ever approached the historic Christ in the true attractiveness and influence of his grand individuality? His influence drew men upward, truthward, Godward, and ever toward their own supreme good. He stands upon the so level plain of the human ages, like a solitary mountain whose summit hides itself in the skies. And let it be noted by every influence-seeking disciple that Christ's own power over men was gained, not by conformity to "the world," but by his utter, unselfish, benevolent renunciation of the world. It was the world-renunciation of love. He "drew" men by his voluntary self-denials, by his utter and loving self-sacrifices, by his being "lifted up." Paul, too, and the other apostles followed their Lord. They "pleased all men in all things," and were "made all things to all men;" they became "servants unto all," — not by joining

in popular worldliness, pleasures, and display, but by imitating Christ in his unselfish, world-renouncing life. And they exhorted their successors, the Christians of all ages, "not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed;" to be "dead with Christ from the rudiments" — the characteristic ideas and first principles — "of the world;" to be "crucified unto the world," superior through faith and love to its materialisms and world-idolatries. And can we doubt that the methods of Christ and the Apostles, exemplifying as they do the stress of all Bible teachings, are the true and best methods to genuine Christian power over men?

But the drift of the times is in the opposite direction. Christian men and women are aiming to become influential for Christ by ways which he himself utterly repudiated, and which "never came into his mind." They voluntarily "fall down" in vassalage to the world's ideas and demands. They think to draw the worldly classes to their Christianity by imitating the world in its extravagances and magnificence, its splendid luxurious banquets, its showy "costly array," and its popular fashionable pleasures. They wish to be large-hearted and liberal toward the world, adopting not only pleasures and practices that are confessedly harmless and recreating, but even such as are question-

able, dangerous, and damaging, provided they be popular. In these schemes of influence-seeking, however, they are but dupes of a "confidence-man." The world promises to give them the kingdom,—a kingly, personal power in society,—in recompense for all this willing subservience and vassalage. But, instead of this, the rule of Christ in their own hearts is undermined or overthrown; their time and vital working-power and the money at their command are consumed in the whirl of the world's exhausting excitements and expensive demands; they but grind, like Samson, in the weary mill of the Philistines; they countenance and confirm in society that selfish earthliness which Christianity has been sent to resist and overcome; and, instead of amassing genuine Christian influence, they bring into doubt their own piety, and even sometimes the truth and Divine-ness of the religion which they desire to advance.

Upon the organized churches of our land, likewise, has fallen the snare and witchery of this same temptation. They, too, in this Mission-age have been seized with the benevolent desire to send forth their roots through all adjacent society, and to draw men under their shadow and to the sharing of their blessed fruit. But in regard to their Christian influence as churches there lie before them, as before individual Christians, two

sorts of influence, — the true and the spurious, — and two methods of acquiring it; namely, by imitating Christ, or by obeying and copying the world. And let it be noted, that the kernel and substance of this specific temptation as addressed to our churches lies in the one alternative and choice, whether each body of believers shall emphasize, make prominent, and depend upon the “outward adorning” or the “inward;” upon spiritual graces and good works, and God’s own manifested presence and indwelling, or upon sensuous charms and material attractiveness. The latter is the only church-beauty which the world cares for or insists upon, enforcing its demand by the offer and pledge of “the kingdom.” On the other hand, it is most noticeable that God has never commanded the Christian Church to put on any outward attractiveness or to assume any earthly splendors. Under the symbol-system of the Old Testament, in the childhood of the race, and to ages requiring object-lessons, He did, indeed, give the plan of a temple “exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries.” But that grand structure was a “pattern of things in the heavens,” a “figure of the true,” eternal tabernacle, and the centre of a temporary, divine system of types. And it was also a “publishing-house” for the Most High, the best possible for

the times; because of which "kings brought presents" unto the Jehovah of the Jews. But it passed away with the prophetic symbolism of which it formed a part, and is no precedent or law for this new economy of antitypes. It lives rather as a permanent, divine warrant for the most effective publishing-houses for Christ and the gospel possible to each age. But even to the Jewish Church the prophets emphasized "the beauty of holiness," and the "beauty" and the "glory" of Jehovah's presence in his temple. These would ever render it "the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth." And when Jesus came, — the founder and model of a new kingdom, — he put on no external attractiveness. There was about him no kingly "beauty," no outward regal magnificence "that men should admire him." He evidently depended not at all upon externals. Thousands of years before, as the Word of God by whom "all things were made," he had begun a grand illustrative experiment of the power of material grandeurs and wonders and of all created beauty to draw men to the knowledge and love of the Infinite God. For forty centuries or more, this experiment had been in progress. And, as the result of it, Jesus well knew how, gradually and all the world over, men had idolized in their hearts these created wonders, had taken them formally for their gods, and made

them, directly or through symbols, the objects of the ostentatious and corrupt worships of heathenism. They had "worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator." And well he knew, also, that even amid the light of Judaism men, shamed and driven by Divine judgments from open idolatry, had nevertheless (like the unregenerate souls of all the Christian ages) idolized and served earthly things, in fact cherishing even under the forms of a divine religion the same essential paganism in their hearts; for, as Matthew Henry says, "Worldliness is the essence of heathenism." And when "the Word was made flesh" and undertook to introduce and make triumphant on the earth a heaven-like kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, did he repeat that same experiment which had proved through all the ages such a failure? As we behold him, he has carefully divested himself of all sensuous attractions. He seems to have shunned and spurned, as damaging to the errand and purpose of his life, all material show. He emphasized and put forward, not natural material attraction and impressiveness, but the supernatural power of heaven-born truth and faith, hope and charity, —the "more excellent way" of self-sacrificing love. The "spiritual house" which he was about to build should have all the Christian graces for its

“costly array,” and the fruits of the Spirit instead of material splendors. The Church for which he gave himself should be glorious with an unearthly beauty like his own, “not having spot or wrinkle, but holy and without blemish.”

But cannot even genuine, evangelical Christianity make a real gain of power by combining these two,—the material and the spiritual attractiveness? Jesus did not do it. The combination did not enter into his Christianity. The glories of God’s own visible creation, the wonders and the beauty of the heavens and earth, would still, he knew, through all the Christian ages plead, as material forms could best do it, the claims of their Creator. He did not recommend to his churches, either by any word or precedent, to attach to themselves, as a means of attracting men to him, the impressiveness or charm of any materialistic or sensuous device or display. Without such outward appliances, the churches of the first three centuries drew men to them, in spite of the terrors of persecution, in such numbers as discouraged the malice of their enemies. The Church, after Constantine, did attempt the combination in question, and Romanism was the development and result. It is the lesson of history and experience that whenever the spirit of display comes into the Christian heart or into the Christian Church, the

spirit of Christlike self-denial and self-sacrifice goes out. The two are uncongenial, if not incompatible. Self-sacrifice describes and sums up the earthly life-plan and work of the Christ,—the intelligent and needful self-sacrifice of love. This was the fundamental law of his life, the very genius of his Christianity,—and this self-display antagonizes; for on the pinnacle of the temple it was his temptation to substitute the attractiveness of self-display (by entering upon a life-career of show-miracles) for the true and heaven-appointed self-sacrifices of his Messianic priesthood. A similar enticement has now assailed the Christianity of our country, backed by “the world’s” conditional offer of the gift of a kingly church-influence.

Let us turn now, and glance over our broad land from the eastern seaboard to the Mississippi and the Lakes, and from the central valley to the Pacific shore. Toward what quarter moves the prevailing wind-current of the age-temptation? Are the churches of the great commercial centres, and of the ambitious inland cities, and those likewise of the towns and villages and hamlets, seeking power over surrounding society through spiritual, or mainly through outward, attractions? Are they following the precedents of apostolic and primitive Christianity, or are they unconsciously mov-

ing in the wake of the Protestant State-churches of Europe and of the secularized Church of Rome? Are they obeying and imitating Christ, or are they doing homage to the world in the ways which they prefer and depend upon for winning church-influence? Here and there, and at intervals, we see men of all classes drawn sometimes to the plainest and homeliest structures, wherever the Spirit of God is present in power. But more frequently we behold church edifices, as by a set policy, made "attractive,"—attractive, often, at an extravagance of expenditure which involves heavy debts and mortgages; studiously attractive by every sensuous art and material charm which the means and ingenuity of the congregation can compass. Architectural magnificence and every practicable device to delight the ear and please the senses are used expressly for this end. The wealthier metropolitan churches set the example; and the lesser cities, the towns, and even the rural hamlets follow the precedent. Moreover, this tendency toward externals gains intensity, manifestly, from the ambitious rivalries of contiguous churches of different denominations, or of the same, vying one with another for influence over the wealthier and more fashionable classes, or over the great mass of society. And this among our churches seems so common as to be justly called the "drift of the times."

And what are the results? Do the churches really achieve thus a regal Christian influence, each over the adjacent multitudes? Do they draw men by these devices toward the true Christian life? They often gain, indeed, a certain influence; but in fact Christ's own Christianity and that of the Bible is sadly travestied. The policy of the church reacts upon its own inner life, and unspiritualizes it. The zeal for external attractions gives to its Christianity an impulse toward worldly form and show, and supplants the spirit of true soul-saving work. Thoughtful men look on and compare this Christianity, as they see it, with the creed of the Church and its professions, and they grow sceptical; while instead of counter-working the world-idolatry which it was sent to condemn and overcome, the Church, by the example of its impressive and expensive splendors, and by its high valuation of externals, becomes the sanction and example and bulwark of that ambitious extravagance, that devotion to outward displays, and that practical materialism which now so leaven and characterize American society.

And thus this popular conformity of individual Christians and of churches to the world, as a means to soul-saving, becomes an expensive failure. For how could we expect these poor artificial splendors and churchly attractions to do for

human souls what all the matchless magnificence of God's material creation has so utterly failed to do? But the arch-adversary of genuine Christianity would prefer any vain or damaging device rather than the adoption of Christ's own method to gaining moral power over men and society.

Another specific feature of the age-temptation concerns the modes of raising money for Christian uses. Money is a grand need of this Missionary age, — money for humane, philanthropic, and educational work, and money in vast and increasing sums for the manifold world-evangelizing enterprises in city and country, at home and abroad. Happily for the Church, there is a divine system of finance, not codified indeed, but to be gathered from financial precedents, principles, rules, ends, and motives, as stated in the Old and New Testaments; as the common law of England is culled from the usages and decisions of courts, and from the various treatises of writers. The Scripture precedents for gathering and giving money are such as the contributions for the building and service of the Tabernacle, and for the building and rebuilding of the Temple, — the wondrously free and self-sacrificing liberality of Pentecostal and Apostolic times,¹ and the special precedent of Christ's own example and life. Of the principles of this

¹ Acts ii. 44, 45, and iv. 34, 35; 2 Cor. viii. 1, 2.

system we have samples in the Bible ideas, that man is but a steward and tenant of the earth, and God the proprietor of all; that true giving is both an offering and a loan to God, which taxes faith and calls for self-denials, and is to be cheerful, deliberate, and according to the ability that God giveth. Moreover, this Scripture scheme of finance has its own characteristic ends,—such as the meeting of genuine human needs of every sort, as they were met by the miracles and prophetic work of Christ while on the earth; the educating of the Church to a God-like munificence toward even “the unthankful and the evil,” and to the grateful imitation of “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,” who “for our sakes became poor that we might be made rich;” in a word, the growth of Christians themselves in unworldliness, faith, and Christlike love, and the glory coming to Christianity and to God from the “good works” of believers, even their manifest “subjection to the Gospel of Christ and liberal distributions unto all.” For these ends the Bible-system must be perfect, for it is from God. No other scheme so develops Christian philanthropy and Christlike compassion toward human want and suffering. It is, indeed, a divine gymnasium, whereby—through laborings and savings and self-sacrifices that “we may have to give to him that

needeth " — Christian character acquires life and force and genuine development. Nor is there any scheme of financiering by which so much money can in the end be raised for all Christian uses. Can the Church, then, ever be induced to exchange the Bible-system for methods human and worldly?

There are two rival historical plans of Church-finance. One of these supplies the needs of the Church through the patronage of the civil government,—as under the State-church system of our own Colonial history and of modern Europe, and of Constantine and his successors. The other proposes to raise money for religious and charitable uses by whatever means, fair or foul, and through the promiscuous contributions alike of saints and sinners,—as the Church of Rome has been doing for ages. The methods to which for a generation our American Christianity has been tempted savor of an age which from some "high-mountain" outlook is longing for the kingdom. And when Christianity, straitened for means through the very extravagances by which it has sought influence over society, cries for financial help in sustaining the Church and its enterprises, the tempter offers to "give" it money on that old condition: "Fall down and worship me. Let me dictate your modes of raising money, and all shall be thine."

And as the angler must accommodate his bait to the kind of fish he is seeking to catch, so evangelical Christianity must exchange the methods and motives of Bible-finance for arts and devices that will meet the taste and demand of the world.

But are there, in fact, any schemes of money-getting of this class now popular among our churches? Let us take almost any standpoint in our broad land, with the Bible in our hands and the history of early American Christianity before us, and we open our eyes in amazement to find fully developed and popularized a system of financial arts unknown to American churches before the present century, and unknown wholly to the Old and New Testaments. Introduced soon after the opening of this Missionary era, it has unfolded with it. It proposes to *sell*, not church offices and dignities and spiritual grace, as Rome has done, but amusements, sensuous pleasures, banquets, buffoonery, fun, and frolic. If the Papal priests and monks revived the theatre six hundred years ago, they seem to have done it for the gratuitous amusement of the people. But our Christianity is to amuse men for pay, and for replenishing the exchequer of the Church. And our churches from the Atlantic to the Pacific, in city and country, and of every denomination, seem

gradually and with rare exceptions to have welcomed as a rich discovery these world-pleasing, easy, money-getting novelties. The system, as the years have rolled on, has varied more or less its special devices. But beginning with "church fairs," it has come to include "festivals" for every season, banquets of every sort, temporary restaurants, "New England kitchens," tableaux, theatricals, dances for charity and for the church, grab-bags, ring-cakes, petty lotteries, bazaars, baby shows, "pound parties," "mum sociables," etc. And Christian men and women, all over the land, have enthusiastically enlisted — voluntary world-vassals — as caterers, actors, harlequins, and buffoons. Had the blessed Master been visibly present at some of these scenes enacted for his cause and sometimes within his house, would he not again have made a "scourge of small cords" and emptied both the apartment and the money-changers' tables? As a sample, we introduce the following description, from the pen of a Christian friend, of a "bazaar" opened in an evangelical church in one of the largest cities of the interior, less than ten years ago. It was a financial enterprise in behalf of the expenses and debts of a church which paid its pastor a salary of between five and ten thousand dollars. It included, writes our correspondent, —

“First, various booths or partitioned apartments in the basement of the church, filled in the most attractive manner with different commodities, such as dry goods donated by solicitation from various mercantile houses, together with the handicraft of the ladies ; second, a kitchen and dining-room, well supplied with rich and dainty viands of modern times, presided over and dealt out by interesting ladies at remunerative prices ; third, a post-office, through which many a sentimental missive passed, each adding to the general fund by way of postage ; fourth, a Jacob’s well, with Rebecca drawing therefrom lemonade at ten cents a glass ; fifth, a grab-bag, or sack filled with small packages of candies, nuts, small dolls, etc., with the privilege of taking one out in the dark for a certain sum paid ; sixth, comic theatricals ; seventh, a large cake, to be lifted and guessed at, the one guessing correctly receiving the cake ; and last, a baby-show, with an admission-fee, and a premium to the finest specimen of babyhood.”

The newspapers of town and country have long teemed with pre-announcements and descriptions of similar church financierings, upon a simple or more elaborate scale. A single number of the “Springfield Republican” (Mass.) once made mention of half-a-dozen such gatherings, and closed its brief account of a “jolly” supper-table festival in an evangelical church with the remark, that “eternal punishment was a prominent topic of conversation.” For a Western church, completing a somewhat ambitious house of worship, a local

paper advertises a money-making "mum-sociable" thus: "Laughing, grimaces, and all kinds of pantomime allowable; let every lover of fun be present." But enough of this.

And "where is the harm in a little hilarity?" There need not be any. We are speaking, however, of church methods of charitable and religious finance,—methods such as a business man, whether Christian or worldly, could not adopt in his business without despising himself and being despised by society. Of the snare and deceit actually entering into these devices something may be judged from their source. They have originated in the complaisance and subserviency of the Church to the world. They are vivified and presided over by the spirit of the world. They are characteristically, and sometimes intensely and utterly, worldly. And in so far as they supplant and set aside the modes and the motives of the Bible-scheme, they involve to Christianity a tremendous loss,—the loss of all the ends and benefits of that divine and perfect system. Faith in the promises, made to those who obey God in giving, loses both its needed exercise and confirmation. The idea of Christian self-denial and sacrifice is also largely eliminated from the work of giving, and in its place there enters a spirit self-indulgent and earthly. That honest, whole-souled,

Christlike philanthropy, which is the life of Christianity and the true working capital of Christ's Church, declines; because it lacks the heaven-appointed exercise and discipline, and the life-giving influence of the Bible-motives to benevolent giving, laboring, and saving. Moreover, the Church suffers an incalculable loss of moral power. For, however much money Christianity may give, it can no more "draw men" without self-sacrifice than Jesus could. Not indeed by the empty self-sacrificings of a morbid and self-righteous asceticism, nor by self-sacrifice as a mock-tragedy and show, and as a piece of Jesuitical trickery; but by such denyings of self as are in this world an indispensable evidence of real love, by the sacrifices of that genuine Christian communism¹ which gives, not at the demand of imperious and incorrigible idleness, but to real, self-helpful, and especially Christian need. Till sin and misery are ended upon earth, living Christianity must consent to be a willing "partaker of the sufferings of Christ," giving, not under the argument "You will never feel it," but until every Christian does feel it,—feels it as the early Christians felt it, when after Pentecost they "sold their possessions" and distributed to every man's need; and as Christ himself felt it during all his lowly self-denying life,

¹ Acts ii. 44, 45.

and especially at the point of the soldier's spear. And then, can God and Christianity receive any gratitude or glory among men from money-getting devices in which the spirit of the world rules, in which the hand of the world often predominates, and for which there is neither precedent nor sanction in the Christian Scriptures? Moreover, beyond all this loss, there is positive damage, and in various ways. The most worldly elements of our churches often come to the front, taking the rule of financial methods and affairs; and Christianity is dishonored and compromised, as men in their hearts despise those who merely entertain and amuse them for pay. And not only so, but in the preferred and popularized use of methods so utterly secular the Church is itself secularized. In becoming the world's voluntary vassal for the sake of money, it forfeits its independence as really as when it becomes a dependent State-pensioner. It also damages and degrades even worldly men, by asking them to give to the claims of philanthropy and of God from such ignoble motives. It educates the young and society at large into giving to the cause of benevolence and of Christianity only through the attraction and recompense of some sensuous indulgence and delight. Even as to the amount of money actually raised for true Christian charity and work, these

methods are suicidal. They lessen the volume of that stream of genuine and spontaneous Christian benevolence which carries the machinery of true Christianity, because they dry up its fountains in the millions of Christian hearts. And while they bring actually less money into the treasury of Christianity than would be secured under God's motives and methods, the moneys in fact raised, having come so largely from the worldly, are often through their influence diverted from genuine soul-saving work, and expended to gratify church luxuriousness, ambition, and display. And when the two specific forms of the age-temptation just described are combined,—namely, the temptation to worldly methods of gaining influence and the enticement to secular methods of raising money,—we behold the Christians and the churches of our land under the power of a double and most subtle age-snare. They are tempted to get money rapaciously, by methods which have no precedent or sanction in the Word of God, and then, for the sake of influence, to lavish that money unsparingly for the sensuous attractions and outward magnificences which the world loves and demands. And all this is done in the expectation and desire of advancing the world-kingdom of Christ; while through the churches and all over the land are ringing the

"Macedonian cries" of the unevangelized, suffering, starving millions, and while our missionary agencies of every class are reiterating their appeals for means to do the true, commanded work of Christ and Christianity among men. Is it not a spectacle grievous in the sight of Heaven, and humiliating and saddening to all who understand its influence and results, to behold our American Christianity eagerly going with the world in its self-indulgent, costly pleasures and displays, and then, by sundry vassal-arts, going on its knees to the world for financial help to carry forward the blessed work of Christ and his Church?¹

A third specific form of the age-temptation touches a still more central and vital point. It concerns directly the end and purpose of all the work of the historic and ascended Christ; namely, that "salvation of souls" into which "prophets inquired," into which "angels have desired to look," and which is the very "glory that should follow" his sufferings.² For the kingdom of Christ is the kingdom of "the saved." It is a kingdom in human hearts, generically like in this respect to

¹ Some months ago it was announced that the Protestant Episcopal Church, first of all the Christian denominations in our land, had not only publicly warned communicants against the theatre, public dancing, and like amusements, but had protested against frivolous and worldly modes of raising money for the Church and for charitable purposes.

² 1 Pet. i. 9-12.

that of every kingly human soul that has ever ruled his fellows through their own trust and love. And into this kingdom men are led, one by one. The kingdom enlarges when one more human heart admits Christ as its king, and it is strengthened when any Christian soul makes real growth in faith, or love, or loyalty. They belong to this kingdom who have "received" Christ as their Saviour and Master, and to whom he has given "power to become sons of God." But the heart's trust and love must needs be always voluntary. Human hearts choose whom they shall love and trust, and no upright being can ever attempt to win confidence and affection except by exhibiting himself as he really is. And Christ, accordingly, gets for himself his promised kingdom only through the truth. And when he witnessed before Pontius Pilate that good confession, "I am a King," he naturally added, "I was born and came into the world to bear witness to the truth." For the true is the natural and divine argument for the right; and the real is the logical basis and reason for the good. Religious lies are of the Devil, for he is "the father" of them; and his principedom over the world has been acquired and maintained solely by deceit. There is such a thing as absolute religious truth; and "through belief" of this "salvation" comes. And since Christianity, by

Christ's own definition of it, is "doing truth,"¹ truth must be both the law and the motive of all moral goodness. Only a true view of themselves and of Christ will ever prevail on human souls to take him for their Saviour-king; and only new truth, or clearer truth, will ever strengthen his power over them. Religious truth is found more or less in all God's three revelations,—in his works, in his acts, and in his Word. But the latter has gathered into itself the vital truths of both the others; and has unfolded a perfect law of life, a free and perfect redemption and remedy, and a perfect system of motives and arguments to all rightness and goodness. This divine Word-revelation is, therefore, the one instrumentality for persuading men to the voluntary acceptance of genuine Christianity. This is the view of the Christian Scriptures. The souls that have been born into the kingdom of Christ in all the ages say, with those of apostolic times, "He begat us with the Word of truth." They were "born, not of corruptible seed, but by the Word of God." Moreover, it is by "the sincere milk of the Word" that they "grow." And when in that grandest of all earthly prayers Jesus asks, as his chief desire for those he loved, their sanctification, he pleads, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy Word is

¹ John iii. 21.

truth." He evidently accounted this to be the one divine instrumentality to that end. Moreover, when the apostles sought to persuade men to receive Christ's heavenly kingdom into their hearts, they "commended themselves to men's consciences by manifestation of the truth." This is "the sword of the Spirit," the only conquering weapon of the Christian warfare, the one instrument the Godhead knows or uses in the direct work of making converts to Christ. Creation, — Nature and the mind of man, — supplies evidences, symbols, suggestions, and analogies. By providences, — with his hand of mercy and his "rod of iron," — the invisible ascended King is "knocking" at the doors of human hearts, and has, through all the Christian ages, been breaking down the barriers and bursting open the barred gates by which the nations have shut out his rule and gospel. His judgments soften and clear the wayside, the rocky and thorn-covered soil, and make ready the "good ground;" but his truth is the only "seed" of the new life.¹ Mingled with howsoever much or little of human chaff, it is the "wheat" of God that, lodging in the mellowed or even chaff-covered soil, takes root and brings forth the harvests of the saved. This weapon, furnished to the soldiers of Christ's army by the government they serve, is the one that wins

¹ Luke viii. 11.

all the genuine victories, the only one that ever does any real execution. And will the tempting world, dreading above all things this "powerful," "piercing" sword, and barred by the spirit of the age from wresting it away by persecution and violence, insist upon the voluntary surrender of it? And can the Christian host be prevailed on to scabbard it or to cast it away?

But there is a weightier question still. What arm can wield effectively this divine and conquering weapon? Is Paul's "logic on fire," or Apollos's mighty eloquence, or Peter's boldness and Pentecostal zeal sufficient? Are the Word and the witnessing obedient Church enough? If human hands plant and water God's genuine wheat-seed, is that all; or, through the mysterious power of subtle, sky-born influences, must God himself work in all kinds of husbandry? If all the life-germs of whatever sort upon the earth are from the creating Spirit, is it for human power, or rather for the Spirit's power, to vivify them and perfect the golden harvest? In the winning of his kingdom, Christ and Christianity have recognized the vital need and work of the Holy Ghost. Only the Spirit can effectively use his own "sword," — a "mighty" weapon indeed, but mighty only "through God." The seed is divine; but neither he that planteth it nor he that watereth is "anything." "God giveth

the increase." If human souls voluntarily enter this Christ-kingdom, in the view of its founder they are "born" into it "of the Spirit." Indeed, every heart-conquest made for Jesus, every new province of this heaven-kingdom won in a trusting, loving human soul, is the Holy Spirit's own work. The elements of the Christian character and life, — "love, joy, peace, faith, etc.," — are all the Spirit's "fruits." And if within this kingdom there be any increase and intensifying of life and strength, "it is the Spirit that quickeneth." If Christians "abound in hope," or are inwardly "strengthened with might;" or if, like wrestling Israel, they come to have power with God and with men, — it is "by the Spirit," and because they are "endued with power from on high." In a word, the Holy Spirit is the one effective agent of all Christ's real kingdom-getting in the world. Christ works through him. In all spiritual conquests, advances, and triumphs, he is Christ's efficient omnipresent substitute. And it was by this view that Jesus comforted and strengthened his sorrowing disciples, when about to leave them in a hostile world, saying, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you." For that they were to "tarry in Jerusalem." Through that they were to "receive power," as his wonder-working

and world-wide "witnesses." By that as their world-conquering ally was "the world" to be convinced of the three central vital truths of Christianity, which every saved soul learns; namely, "of sin, of salvation, and of judgment." And accordingly, in that Old-Testament promise of the Holy Spirit to be "poured out in the last days upon all flesh," Jesus saw "the promise of the Father;" and it was likewise his own promise, repeated to his disciples. Among God's "exceeding great and precious" pledges this stands supreme; as Damascus and the grand plain of Mexico are among the world's landscapes, or as Mt. Blanc amidst the heights of Switzerland. For after the coming of the Saviour this was the one great need of man, the greatest remaining gift of God to the Church and to the world. And this the risen King having gone up to the right hand of the Majesty on high, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, "shed forth," — the cause of the Pentecostal "glory that followed his sufferings." Then Christ "received his promised kingdom." Then began his real rule on earth. Then were made manifest the two conquering powers of Christianity and of the Church, — the word as coming from the "flaming" tongue of Peter, and the spirit "sent forth" by the ascended Christ. From that day onward, the Holy Spirit has been his vice-gerent in the world.

They whom Christ leads are "led by the Spirit." Where he dwells in a human heart or in a body of believers, there is a "temple of the Holy Ghost." He is also Christ's vice-conqueror, winning every inch of heart-territory that is in reality gained for him in the world. Indeed, his kingdom and that of Christ are co-extensive; and they are identical. Whenever welcomed, trusted, and allowed to take the command, he always brings victory; and he comes to the aid of the Church whenever sought for with the oneness, self-consecration, and faith of that pre-Pentecostal prayer-meeting.

But what is now the age-temptation touching the Word of God and the Spirit of God? To Jesus himself upon the mountain it came as a temptation to trust for the gaining of the kingdom to the assumed friendliness of Satan, and to his promise, "All these things will I give thee;" to substitute these for the help of heaven and for the promise of the Comforter; and to seek the kingdom, not by the conquering might of the truth and spirit, but through the conditional "gift" of the prince of this world. To the mediæval Church in its "mountain" era (as we have seen) came substantially the same enticement not to publish, but to stifle, its witness and message; not to trust and seek the Holy Spirit, but to employ for subduing to itself all men and kingdoms means familiar to history,

which were either secular or Satanic. In the present kingdom-getting age of our American churches, we would naturally expect similar tactics of temptation respecting these two divine agencies for winning the world to Christ. There are but two ways of harmonizing Christianity and man. The one is to conform men's beliefs, affections, and lives to Christianity and the Christian Scriptures; and the other is to conform Christianity and its teachings and demands to the lives, wishes, and popular beliefs of men. The one is the conversion of men to Christianity; the other is the perversion of Christianity to men. The former is the scriptural and divine method; the latter is that of the tempter and the world. And to this latter our American age-temptation seeks to bend the Church. This temptation is modified, of course, by the spirit of the nation and of the times. We are a people ruled by majorities. We defer to public opinion, are swayed by it, and tremble before it; as under monarchies men bow before kings and courts, and conform to their ways and will. The spirit of independence marks us less as individuals, than as a nation. Moreover, the present drift of the age in our land is Sadducean. We tend toward religious doubt and liberalism, and easy worldly living. And, accordingly, there has come upon our churches and pulpits

and Christian workers a trade-wind of influence, moving them to convert men to Christianity through politic and popular religious teachings, rather than through a fearless and faithful "demonstration of the truth;" and to let their own faith "stand in the wisdom of men," rather than "in the power of God." They are under a temptation to present, not "the whole counsel of God, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear," but the attractive side of Christian truth, half-truths, which make at best but half-Christians. Nor does this temptation stop here. It would reduce the gospel truth in the popular pulpit ministrations to a mere flavoring of Christianity; and substitute for it anything—originalities, speculations, sentimentalisms, literature, science, politics, or poetic fancies and sensationalisms—that will draw and charm and hold the multitude. So, likewise, in respect to the Holy Spirit. The age-temptation presses American Christians to seek and trust to popular favor, the world's co-operation and friendliness, rather than to the "world-reproving" and soul-renewing "Comforter." And Christian men and women find themselves under the power of an age-current, moving away from the "closet" and the "upper chamber" where the Spirit's power is sought, and toward those scenes of festive and social hilarity and fashionable pleasure where they court

and win the favor of the worldly. And instead of the might of the Spirit accompanying the genuine gospel, the Church is moved to seek the attraction and power of eloquence, genius, tact, logic, pathos, and personal magnetism, combined with all the sensuous impression and power of architecture and art. In short, the tone and the tactics of worldly society toward the tempted churches of our times is this: "Never, by the arguments and methods of Jesus Christ and the Bible, can you make converts of us. You cannot do it by open war upon our chosen ideas and ways and life. But be conciliatory and friendly. Believe in our willingness to accept and profess your Christianity, if only you will conform its teachings and its requirements to our tastes and wishes. We rule society; and Christianity can never triumph without consulting and pleasing us. Yield to our ideas and demands, and accommodate to them the Christianity you teach; and then we will accept it, and give it the victory."

And has this strategy made any palpable impression, within the last quarter or third of a century, upon the religious teachings and life of our American churches? Are there any tokens of a trade-wind blowing steadily toward one quarter, and betraying its direction not only by the inclination of reeds and saplings, but by the swayed foliage

of forests, and, in the more exposed positions, by the leanings even of old stout trunks and sheltering trees? In respect to those duties and doctrines of the Christian Scriptures which are specially obnoxious and repellent to worldly minds, has there fallen upon the churches an epidemic, though by no means universal, policy of partial or entire silence which savors of voluntary vassalage? Every observer has his own standpoint and his own newspaper spy-glass, to scan the religious horizon. Moreover, for every current in the air or ocean there is a counter current; and the volume of the one lessens or swells with that of the other. Good and evil, when they stand confronting and while neither yields, must intensify each other. Never has there been an age of so many and so grand and far-reaching Christian enterprises; and never we believe, since the age of the Apostles, nobler examples of Christian consecration, or richer tokens of the manifested power of God. But are there not also equally mighty counter-currents, moving largely in the direction and under the power of the age-temptation? To all thoughtful observers with whom the Word of God is the one rule of judgment, the answer may be painful but cannot be difficult. The Scripture landmarks and boundary lines, so clear and broad, between the Christian and the worldling, and between the

Church and the world, seem now so broken down and blurred that there is a voluntary commingling of the two kingdoms; and a respectable church-going worldling can hardly be discriminated from a recognized yet worldly Christian. The terms of discipleship, too, and the standard of Christian living, as Jesus stated them, seem now so lowered that the worldly do not find it a very arduous or burdensome thing to make and to maintain the outward profession of Christianity. And selfish worldliness,—the generic sin of mankind, the essence of all idolatry, and against which the Scripture, both the law and the gospel, so utters its thunders and pleads its love,—seems now, in its respectable and popular forms, to have negotiated a truce with our Christianity, and to be either tolerated or vindicated. The Bible law of self-sacrificing love, which was the “mind” of Christ and is the essence of Christianity, appears likewise to be so unwelcome, even in the churches, that it has well nigh ceased to be the basis and substance of the approved age-system of Church-finance; and even our Missionary societies and Missionary periodicals, while pleading so earnestly the claims of the world’s unevangelized millions and their own depleted and inadequate treasuries, seem rarely to urge the precedents of Christ and of the apostolic age, or to insist upon Christ-like self-denials and

unworldliness as the true means of supply and relief. Such ideas and precepts as, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world; The friendship of the world is enmity with God; Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple; If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me; Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth; Be not conformed to this world; Enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, who mind earthly things,"—such passages as these seem largely expurgated from the popular age-exhibitions of Christianity. So also in regard to the Scripture *doctrines*, which are but the divine motives to all right-doing. There are aspects, influences, and results of Christianity which concern this world, and these are popular; and there are others that pertain to eternity, and these are unpopular. There are Scripture motives, powerful and pleasing, that ought to *draw* sinners to repentance; and there are other motives, mighty and terrible, that ought to *drive* them. Men need and God uses both. But the age-tendency is toward the pleasing and popular. Accordingly, the earthly relations and benefits of Christianity are brought into the foreground of the picture, and eternity

and its interests fall into the background. And of the three great truths of which both the Bible and the Comforter "reprove the world," the second, namely "righteousness" (or salvation), is the one unfolded, — salvation, full and free, sometimes without definite and Scriptural conditions, and with well-known tendencies, at least in some quarters, toward ultimate salvation for all. On the other hand, the first of the three, namely the Bible doctrine of "sin," and the relations of God, of Christ, and of Christianity to it; and likewise the last of the three, the doctrine of "judgment," or the divine purpose that as "the prince of this world is judged" so shall all his subjects be judged, — that doctrine which Paul on Mars' Hill, when pleading with "all men everywhere to repent," makes to be God's "Because," and of which the lips of incarnate Truth and Love (in the midst of a nation that already believed the doctrine) so often and faithfully warned the ungodly, — these divine medicines for human sin the Christianity of the times, in deference to the world's dislike of them, seems unwilling to urge upon sinners. Unfold either of these two themes, but especially the latter, before one of our average Evangelical congregations, and influential Christians protest, "That is true, but we don't like to hear it." Or it is said, "If the love of Jesus will not draw men, nothing else will."

Inquire the cause of the wide popularity of some so-called "evangelical" preacher, and you are told, "Oh, he is so liberal! he does not preach the old doctrines; he preaches love." While you accept as a hyperbole the statement that ninety per cent or more of our modern sermons have been upon the love of God, yet you are constrained to feel that there is truth under the figure. And who that has heard the reiterated one-sided exhibitions even of Christ's boundless love, as sometimes presented before our Sunday-schools, has not been ready to say with Professor Park, in the startling exordium of one of his published sermons, "Truth is falsehood; eternal truth is falsehood." Testimonies of the press indicate the fact of this same tendency. One of our foremost secular papers, "The Nation," has discovered a wide "loss of faith in the dogmatic part of Christianity." It says, "People do not believe in the Fall, the Atonement, the Resurrection, and a future state of reward and punishment at all, or do not believe in them with the certainty and vividness which are needed to make faith a constant influence on a man's life. They do not believe they will be damned for sin, with the assurance with which they once did; and they are consequently indifferent to most of what is said to them of the need of repentance." And it concludes that "the decline

of faith in Christian doctrine has deprived religion of a great deal of its power." One of our best literary periodicals bears testimony likewise to a "tremendous change from the Orthodoxy of the fathers," and affirms that "dogmatic theology is losing its hold upon the popular mind."

Our reconnoissance respecting this point has been brief; but are we not compelled to report tokens of a truce — a partial age-truce — arranged tacitly between the Christianity of our times and the world's worldliness? Is there not, plainly, a slackening of hostilities and a strange commingling of the opposing camps? And have not Christian soldiers, regiments, and leaders, here and there, drawn the minie-balls from their rifles, spiked their heavy artillery, and turned the old genuine "warfare" of Jesus and of Paul into a spectacular show of sham battles or dress-parades? The "word of the kingdom" has been kept back, in order to win the kingdom. "The sword of the Spirit" has been surrendered, in the hope of better winning the Spirit's victory. The divine remedies for the world's sin and heart-sickness have been cast away, for the sake of better securing the world's cure. And, instead of the promised help of the almighty Spirit, Christian men and churches have been seeking the favor of the world as the prime condition of Church success. And meanwhile, notwithstand-

ing all the light and labors and religious appliances in this Christian land, the ratio of the conversions to the number of churches and Christians is lower, we are told, than on the Mission-fields of heathenism. And the sweep of this age-current has reached our Christian institutions of learning also, especially our older and more wealthy colleges, involving a relaxation of discipline, an allowed neglect of religious services, an absorption of teachers in mere professional work, along with a flood of new temptations and extravagances.¹

We have now briefly characterized the three prominent specific forms of the age-temptation; namely, the first, pertaining to the methods of gaining Christian and Church influence; the second, to the popular devices of charitable, Missionary, and Church finance; and the third, to the means and power depended upon for converting men to our Christianity. This temptation includes,—as did the “mountain” temptation of Jesus,—both the temptation of the “pinnacle” and that of the “wilderness;” for it assails the prophetic and the priestly, as well as the kingly or conquering work of Christians and the Church. But as the three distinct assaults upon the tempted Jesus were only so many stratagems for turning him

¹ See Professor Tyler's Premium Essay; new edition.

away from the Scripture plan and programme of his Christhood, and for making him a mere worldly Messiah, so the temptations of our American Christianity—as of all Christianity—are but so many efforts of the tempting world to constrain, seduce, and cajole the Christians and the churches of our land away from the Christianity of Christ and of the Bible, and into a conformity with the tastes, ideas, ethics, doctrines, and life of the world. The more reputable classes of worldly society are but too successfully tempting Christians to unchristianize and secularize themselves, their social pleasures, their outward life, and their Christian organizations and methods, and even the very doctrine and gospel of Christ, in order to make our Christianity acceptable to the world. In a word, as Christ's temptation of the "mountain" was voluntarily to secularize himself and his kingdom, that he might thus conciliate the favor of Satan and the world, so the age-temptation of American Christianity is to secularize itself and all things distinctively Christian, with the view and hope of thus Christianizing the world and all things worldly,—our Christianity becoming secularized in fact in its spirit, doctrine, and life; while the world is Christianized only in name and in form. Christianity and the world would then be commingled and outwardly identical, as they have been

so long and widely in Roman Catholic lands. Such a Christianity the worldly world will of course accept, applaud, and patronize, since it is then only their own worldliness under the uniform and banner of Christianity. Oh! the Satanic deadly subtlety of this matchless wile of the "Gates of Hell."

But there is a sure and divine road to the genuine Christian victory and triumph. And in our concluding chapter we will seek to learn, by the light of Christ's own views and example, how Christianity may overcome temptation, and win "the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven."

VIII.

CHRIST'S WAY TO THE VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION, AND TO HIS OWN PROMISED WORLD-KINGDOM.

THE first strong, bold outline of the coming Messiah, sketched by Jehovah Elohim in the garden before Adam's exile, was that of a serpent-crushing and wounded son of a woman,—a conqueror and a sufferer, a suffering conqueror. "He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." By this earliest and fundamental idea of the coming deliverer the hope of mankind was long stayed; and to this as their favorite view the hearts of men were clinging when the Christ appeared. It met a conscious human want of some succor, coming to them from without and from above themselves. It was a basis for men's ideals,—to be filled out, altered, and shaded according to their desires and necessities. It answered also a special need of a tempted, sin-enslaved, militant race; who might thus be inspired with more courage to fight each his own unavoidable life-battle, and to work out his own

deliverance. And — beyond all that men saw in it — it not only promised to all the tempted children of Adam championship and sympathy, but it foretold and insured to them a model victor, who should open and reveal the road to spiritual triumphs like his own.

It is not our business now to attempt a collection and arrangement of all the precious things the Scriptures have said about the overcoming of temptations to evil. We turn, rather, to the tempted Christ himself, to study his methods, and to learn all we can of the precious secret of his victory. And among these methods, we note, —

1. Voluntary solitude, at the prompting of the Spirit. Setting out on his public career as the Messiah, anointed as humanity's true, everlasting Prophet, Priest, and King, he was confronted at once (as we have seen) by the great question, what kind of a Christ he would be. Two distinct and opposite ideas of his Christhood were before him, — one that of the Scriptures, and the other that of the world. Mankind needed what they did not wish, and desired what divine love could not give them. For their prophet they craved a magician-like bread-maker by whose "loaves" they might be fed. For their priest they desired an ostentatious, easy-living worker of idle wonders, who should sanctify their self-indulgence, excite

their veneration, and startle and entertain their superstitious irreligion. And for their king — for the supreme divinity of their hero-worship — they wanted a magnificent, mighty world-conqueror, who should fascinate them by outward splendors, and deliver them from all earthly burdens and oppressions. The Messiah of the Scriptures, on the other hand, was wholly a different personage. In a word, he was the veritable Jesus Christ of our New-Testament history, one who should save lost souls from guilt and sin, and plant on the earth a heavenly kingdom in human hearts. Before the newly inaugurated Messiah, now at the threshold of his life-work, there rose the momentous question which of these Christs he should be, — the Christ of the prophetic Scriptures, or the Christ of the world's ideal and demand. This question had now become a practical one, and pressed for immediate answer. He must consider it fairly, in every aspect of it; and decide. No other being could do this for him. The very question sequestered him from all other souls save God; and therefore it could best be settled in solitude. The liberty and responsibility of the decision were all his own. All the facts, principles, and arguments on both sides of the question he must understand and balance. On the one hand, there was the absolute right and duty in the case; the known will of his

Father; the plan long ago approved in Heaven; the Messianic predictions of all the prophets; and the supreme present and eternal interests of men. But if he should become exactly this Christ he would disappoint the world's expectations, antagonize all their ideals, oppose their tastes and wills, and incur for himself their relentless, united enmity. And then, as the model of his own religion, he would leave to his followers, through the ages, conflicts and tribulations like his own. On the other hand, there was speciousness and some weight in the arguments that pleaded for a partial adoption of the world's ideal. In his heart there was a reluctance unnecessarily to offend and alienate men. There was in him also a desire to ward off from his disciples all avoidable trials, warfare, and suffering of evil; together with a matchless, divine-human compassion for the blinded souls who preferred a worldly Christ, and a sincere pity for the earthly woes and wrongs that so loudly called for relief. Must he disappoint and anger the world? Was it necessary that he so utterly unsecularize himself? Could he not put more of earthly attractiveness into his manifestations of God, and into his redemptive work? Was it not possible, without abandoning the Scripture plan of his Christhood, to modify it in deference to the world's worldliness; and, while being at heart

none the less the Messiah of the prophets, to become visibly more the Christ of the world's hope and desire?

Such questions as these, he foresaw, would meet him at every turn of his pathway. They would crowd themselves upon him when weary and worn, when troubled and in the midst of tempting spies and crafty enemies, and when under the crushing weight of fears and sufferings. And they would then take him at great disadvantage. Was it not better to decide them now in stillness and seclusion, — now, before the eager throngs should pursue him for the loaves and remind him of their fathers' "manna in the wilderness," — now, before the well-fed, wondering multitudes should come to force him to be their king, — now, before his chosen but worldly-minded disciples should bar his way to the cross, saying, "Pity thyself, Lord; this shall not be unto thee," — now, before his bursting heart should be torn (worse than by the soldier's spear) with the disappointed world's bitter cry, "Away with him; crucify him"? Yes; it would be better. As afterward he taught every disciple to do, he would "sit down first and count the cost;" he would withdraw himself into utter solitude, and settle this great question once and forever, alone. He will settle it in advance, and under circumstances the most advantageous pos-

sible. "And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness;" and, while fasting forty days and forty nights, he takes time to consider and decide the most momentous question ever weighed on earth. And this was his first step toward the victory over temptation.

2. A second thing which we note is that Christ went to this decision and to the attending conflict of soul *armed*. With a heroism and faith so superior to David's, he stood forth a volunteer to meet and overcome the oppressor of his people, his own and their champion-adversary, the arch-enemy of his spiritual work and kingdom. But he did not attempt to fight the Devil with his own weapons, — deceit, and cunning policy, and lies. Nor did he arm himself with any of the world's weapons, — its human philosophizings, its popular literatures, or its "sacred" learnings. For the past thirty years of his life he had constantly "increased in wisdom," even in the knowledge of God's word and truth. He had hidden it in his heart. His soul was leavened with God's own ideas and estimates. He had familiarized himself with all that the Holy Spirit had revealed to men. He had drunk in the spirit and the principles of the Scriptures, their ethics and their doctrines, their perfect simple code of laws and their divine system of motives; he had scaled the heights and gone

down into the depths of their meaning, — as his conversations afterward showed. And with this divine armory of spiritual weapons he was so familiar, that at any moment he could lay his hand on any needed instrument of assault or defence, — divine promise, prohibition, or positive commandment. The conflict that was before him in the wilderness was to be just around the citadel of his own will; and he had fore-armed himself with “the whole armor of God,” wrought and tempered by the Holy Spirit, — “girdle, breastplate, sandals, shield, helmet, and sword.” Accordingly, when his adversary would urge him into a wrong decision through distrust and fear, he repelled the argument by means of the very promise he was tempted to doubt. When again enticed toward a wrong decision through the suggestion of a presumptuous confidence, he mastered the Satanic influence and wile by means of the very prohibition he was then pressed to disobey. And when at last the foiled and desperate enemy aimed at his heart, and with matchless craft and assumption crowded him to gain his coveted kingdom over human souls through voluntary submission to the “prince” and the spirit of this world, he shivered the tempter’s last and deadliest arrow upon the sword-blade of the very command he was so covertly tempted to transgress. His answer to every suggestion of

evil, to every form of his three-fold temptation, was: "It is written!" "It is written!" "It is written!" And armed with the weapons of God's Word,—like David with the sling and stones,—he gained, through them alone, the first complete moral victory ever won on earth.

3. But a third vital thing we notice in the study of Christ's triumph over evil is, that he had just before been "anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power." This anointing—which really constituted him the Messiah—prepared him for overcoming. God, who bestows no unnecessary or superfluous gifts, had given unto him the Spirit, "not by measure,"—there being no measure to his faith. "Full of the Holy Ghost," he had "returned from the Jordan" baptism; and at once he was "led by the Spirit" to the vantage-ground and the victory of the wilderness solitude. By the Spirit he was lifted above all the power of this world,—of its wants, of its fascinations, of its terrors, of its grandeurs, of its pleasures, its fame, its shame, and its glory,—lifted above the realm of the earthly and shadowy into that of eternal realities. And the Spirit of the Lord, now resting upon him, was to him "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might," and it made him "of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord." "The eyes of his understand-

ing" were "enlightened" to know the will of the Father; and his quickened sensibilities and powers could appreciate the mighty reasons and motives which called him to "do the will of him that sent him." But the right decision involved immeasurable sacrifices; and here lay the grand obstacle to its adoption. He must consent to be "despised and rejected of men," to be "wounded and bruised," to be "forsaken" by his Father, to become poor and of no reputation, to be "numbered with transgressors," to have his life made an "offering for sin," to become "obedient unto the death of the Cross," and to do, renounce, and suffer all that the prophets had foretold. And this his high-priestly work of matchless self-sacrifice entered into and underlay all his prophetic and kingly work; for how could he, in such a world, declare "the whole counsel of God" without consenting to utter sacrifice of himself; and how could he win for himself a supreme place in the hearts of the sin-burdened and consciously lost, without manifesting a love that would willingly suffer all things for their salvation? And unto such a self-sacrifice he was "strengthened with might by the Spirit." "Through the eternal Spirit he offered himself without spot to God," — a sacrifice to the redemption of man, to the good of the universe, and to the glory of the Father; and could exultingly cry,

"Lo, I come to do thy will, O God!" And thus, through the seclusion of the wilderness, and the power of the Word, and the fulness of the Spirit, he was prepared for the fourth condition of his triumph over temptation; namely, —

4. His final and right decision. He decided, once and forever, to do the whole will of God, and to be the very Christ of the Old-Testament Scriptures. Never, indeed, through all those forty days of mental struggle had his will swerved toward wrong. Never, in all his "counting of the cost," had he parleyed with Satan. All along, he had steadfastly "resisted the devil." And now he has reached his final choice. Understandingly, irrevocably, cheerfully, triumphantly, he determines to carry out in his life and work the Divine and Scriptural programme of his Messiahship. And in this decision lay his victory. Henceforth he could exultingly say, "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me," and could ever after comfort his tried and tempted followers with the cheering assurance, "I have overcome the world." And from this his Waterloo conflict and victory he went forth to his life-work "in the power of the Spirit," the only soul unscarred by sin in all the history of the race,—the Christian Achilles, wounded only in his fleshly "heel."

But does not the soul that has just surrendered

itself heartily to Christ and his service stand in a position wonderfully like that of the newly baptized son of God? Has he not the same Father above him, and the same law to rule him, and the same great ends to live for? He confronts also the same hostile tempting world and the same powers of darkness, who will continue to assail him until they are overcome. The first great question of his life he has considered; and, after counting the cost and weighing the reasons, has decided it. This he did when honestly and deliberately he chose *to be a Christian*. But now a second question awaits him, scarcely less vital to the interests of souls and the kingdom of Christ than the first; namely, *what kind* of a Christian he will be in the world. For as Jesus, when he went up from the Jordan the acknowledged Christ, had yet to decide, in the long temptation of the wilderness, what kind of a Christ he would be, so this newly-born Christian has a similar decision to make, before he is prepared to go forth to his life-work. From earnestly considering the first great question Satan had hindered him as long as he could; and the same Satanic wiles will delay forever if possible his considering of the second. And yet, if this second question be not taken up and thoughtfully settled, his heart will all his life be divided. Sometimes serving Christ and again

the world; now joyously victorious and then a gloomy captive; here honoring and aiding his master and there wounding and betraying the Lord he loves, — he will live a life full of defeats, failures, and self-reproaches, and then be saved "so as by fire." The world will have swept him away on some of its strong currents, dashed him on some of its rocks and quicksands, or left him disabled and motionless in some of its doldrums or Sargasso-seas.

At the outset of Christ's own career two ideas of his Christhood confronted him; namely, that of the Bible and that of the world. So, every enlisted Christian is met by two opposite ideals of what a Christian should be and do. There is a sort of Christian which the world greatly admires and eulogizes; and there is another style of Christian which Heaven delights in, which the Bible requires, and which Christ illustrated. And between these two every follower of Jesus has to choose. Not more clearly did the Old Testament unfold God's plan and idea of Christ's Messiahship, than do both the Testaments set forth God's law and will as to a Christian's proper character and work. And the world's idea of the Christ it wished for was scarcely more unlike the Bible Christ, than is its ideal Christian unlike the Bible Christian. Which of these he will be is the second

great question which every believing soul is called to decide,—a question *relatively* as momentous to himself, to his work, to other unsaved souls, and to the kingdom of Christ on earth, as was that which Jesus was called to settle in the wilderness. And the same Spirit which “led” him — “drove” him — to decide the great question of his life summons every disciple, with its “still small voice,” to a similar “cost-counting” and choosing. The earliest moment after entering the Christian life is the best for this decision; and for all who have delayed it the best time is the earliest time possible. In his corresponding decision Jesus spent “forty days;” and every follower of his needs to take time enough for the considering of all the facts, weighing of all the arguments, counting upon both sides all the cost, and coming to a conclusion which he will never wish altered. But this he can never do amid the perturbations and annoyances and cares of life, nor under the fascination of the world’s bewilderments. The question deserves and demands the mind’s whole thought and power. A jostled balance cannot fairly weigh; nor will the perturbed compass-needle find the true pole-star until it “settles.” To consider and determine this question, the Christian must go alone into a seclusion like that of his Master in the wilderness. Apart from men and worldly interruptions, alone

with God, he must fight this his own personal battle, and win his own individual victory. Thus "holy men of old" — Moses in the Midian desert, Elijah at the brook Cherith and upon Horeb, and Paul in the wilds of Arabia — sought the solitudes. Jesus, likewise, "went up into mountains apart." And, as an example in modern times, the lamented Rhea of the Persian mission, at the home of the saintly Stoddard, withdrew himself into solitude with God, and so decided this question of which we are speaking; and men wondered at the Christ-likeness of his life.

Christian reader, have you ever taken, like your Lord, this first step toward your own triumph over the tempting world and devil? In following his example, you may like him "suffer, being tempted." Satan will not let you go without a struggle. But you will suffer far more in every way by yielding and delay. And in going into this decisive conflict you must likewise go clad with the "armor" of God's Word, — promises, prohibitions, and positive commands. You will need the special pledges made to "him that overcometh."¹ And you will require most of all that Spirit which inspired the Word, — the Spirit that enlightens, that "strengthens with might," that "works to will and to do," — the Spirit that "filled" Jesus preparatory to his wilderness

¹ Rev. ii., iii., and xxi. 7.

victory. With this Spirit, — which so quickens the sensibilities, clears the perceptions, and “shows the things of Christ,” — Peter and Stephen, and the “hundred and twenty” disciples, are historically described as “filled.” With this Spirit all believers are commanded to “be filled;” and they all have the promise, “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.” Thus armed with the Word and endued with the Spirit, you are furnished for a Christlike victory, — furnished and prepared rightly to settle that decisive question of your life, *what kind* of a Christian you will be. This determination you may, indeed, often be called to confirm or renew; but in making it you have gained a vantage-ground you will never lose. Temptation will have less and less power. The tempter — except in some fierce assaults, such as that upon Jesus in Gethsemane — will more and more let you alone; and, repeating as often as necessary this method of the overcoming Master in the wilderness, your life will become more and more a series and succession of victories, until through grace “more than a conqueror” you shall receive the “crown.”

Nor does this decided purpose to be a Bible Christian involve any thought or pretence of personal sinlessness. It is an honest choosing and decision to live by the Bible; to take its promises

and believe and rest upon them; to adopt its ideas as a law to the intellect, and its precepts and commands as the rule for the life. It is sincerely accepting the Spirit of God and the Word of God as the supreme authority in all matters of religion and duty, and yielding the heart to their blessed rule. In a word, it is deciding three things; namely, to "live by every promise of God;" not temptingly to disobey his "Thou shalt not," in any form of it; and (saying "Get thee behind me, Satan" to every temptation to be the world's vassal) to be loyal and true to every "Thou shalt" of "the Lord thy God." For in this earthly kingdom of the ascended Christ, the Word and the Spirit are now supreme. There are no other "lords over God's heritage," however many "ensamples" Christ's flock may have. To suppose that we can really benefit ourselves or advance God's glory and the cause of Christ, by disobeying the Word, is to set our wisdom—man's wisdom—above the wisdom that is sovereign and infinite.

Thus every "good soldier" of Jesus, in all his life-temptation and conflict, defends, like his tempted Lord, a "Trilateral," whose three distinct strongholds are Faith, Love, and Loyalty,—a faith, a love, and a loyalty like Christ's own. And while these stand firm, the soul is secure.

But what of the churches? Must not vital Christianity, as the living element in an organized body of believers, be victorious just as Christianity is in the individual soul? And are there not before every Christian brotherhood the same two opposite ideals of its true character and work as a church; namely, that of the Bible and that of the world? What grand conceptions of the spirit and life of the Church do David and Isaiah, and Paul and Peter, set forth! And how is the world's conception of it degraded and secularized, like its ideal of the Messiah at his coming! But this latter notion, false and corrupting as it is, operates with a power, steady and mighty, to make the Church worldly and not Christlike. And the example of the tempted Lord invites his churches likewise to seasons and places of seclusion, deliberation, and decision. In the hallowed place of prayer, in an "upper chamber" like that in Jerusalem, in the sacred retirement of God's house apart from the world, a church may gather by themselves, and deliberately face the question whether they will stand upon the Bible or go with the world. Here, while as if keeping a prolonged Sabbath, they mutually "exhort" and "admonish" one another, and while they listen to the faithful unfolding of all God has said upon this matter, let them, after counting all the cost to them as an organization,

decide to be a Bible-church; let them wait for "the promise of the Father," as the hundred and twenty in that pre-pentecostal prayer-meeting; and then the era of their victory will surely have dawned, and there will be joy in the heart of Jesus and "among the angels."

Nor can genuine Christians throughout our whole land find any way so good as Christ's for overmastering the mighty age-temptation which lies upon them. Our busy, restless, excited life needs to be mingled and tempered with more of the wilderness retirement and reflectiveness of the wise and tempted Master. Into depths and shaded recesses men retire from the wide glare, when in the day's glitter they would see the stars. Our Christianity accepts, with great verbal unanimity, the Word of God as the "only rule of faith and practice." This it does nominally. Practically, as we have seen, it is widely consenting to submit itself rather to the rule of the world's will and ways. To overmaster this temptation it must come back "to the law and to the testimony," — to the simple Word of God. It must follow Christ's own utter independence of the world's will, authority and false ideas; and say "Get thee behind me, Satan" to every tempting demand of a worshipful compliance that involves disloyalty to God's Word and Spirit. And it must inscribe

upon its banners, and hide in its heart, that word of the Father and of Christ, "It is written, Thou shalt do homage to the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

But there lies now before our American Christianity a still higher work. Like all true Christianity, it has been furnished with "breastplate" and "shield" and "helmet;" but it has also the "sandals of a gospel made ready for locomotion and use," and it has a "sword." Like a campaigning army, all its defences are only to guard and save it for its work of aggression and conquest. And the standing orders of the great Captain and Leader are, "Go and make Christians of all nations!" As he himself, having triumphantly repelled all Satan's assaults, "began from that time to preach and to say Repent," and to prepare for the coming and victories of his kingdom, so the Church's successful resistance even of the world's last and subtlest temptation is but a condition and preparation for the appointed campaign of world-wide conquest for Christ.

But who shall guide and rule the methods of this long-delayed, long-hoped for victory? Who shall set the living Christianity of this "New World" upon the road to a genuine and complete triumph at home, and to its helping most effectually everywhere the universal reign of Jesus? Is

any one, even the arrogant tempting world, wiser than he who "hid" in himself "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"? Does any one love mankind with a purer, mightier love? Does any one know more of "travail of soul" for the world's "turning from the power of Satan unto God" than he who "endured the Cross, despising its shame"? In the age-work of missions and of world-saving, who can order and lead the conquering host, and guide and rule the whole campaign, so well, so safely, and so surely to victory as the "Captain of Salvation"? And since the very gist and ultimate end of Christ's long temptation by the world's usurping "prince" was to turn him from the divine, prophetic plan and method of recovering for God the dominion and the kingdom; and since that was really the vital question settled by Christ's decisive choice and corresponding career till he went up to glory,—we may confidently go back to learn from the tempted Jesus how his followers are to win his promised world-sceptre and crown.

The wilderness temptation was the "Lion" and the dragon contending for that crown; and in its result it was the "Seed of the woman bruising the Serpent's head." Before the mind of Jesus there then lay two prime questions; namely, Shall he endorse, proclaim, and enjoin, as the Father's

and as his own, the plan for mankind's salvation and redemption foretold in the Old Testament? Shall he publish this as the one divine, universal religion for man and the race? And, second, Can such a Christianity ever gain the belief and acceptance of mankind, by the methods, forces, and agencies which Heaven had purposed and the prophets had foretold? The Scripture unfolding of the aims, spirit, and purpose of Christ and his tempter, with relation to the world and to each other, seems to justify this view of that wilderness scene. And, moreover, the end of that mental and spiritual conflict of the Son of God was his own final decision of those most momentous questions, the grandest ever pondered by any mind on earth. That ultimate decision, in one form of it or another, the Christ expressed in each successive repulse of his three-fold temptation. In the first, he decides that, to win his Messianic kingdom over men, he must and will carry out the predicted plan and method of his faithful, trustful, loving prophet-work for God. In the second, he discloses his settled purpose to fulfil the Old-Testament programme of his self-humbling, self-sacrificing, atoning priestly work and death. And, in the third, he accepts and endorses Heaven's own idea of the nature, manifestations, and methods of triumph of the glorious kingdom he had come to

found. Those wilderness decisions of the tempted Christ settled forever and infallibly all the problems which they touched. They made the Christ of the New Testament identical with the Messiah of the Old. They crystallized Christianity. And the whole divine plan of a religion and a redemption for the world of men, fused in the mind of the tempted Saviour, came forth at length from his triumphant soul cast into perfect, changeless forms of doctrine, duty, method, and life. Heaven's promises were endorsed as the one platform for all Christians to stand upon; Heaven's law of self-renouncing Christlike love was established as their rule of life; and "the sword of the Spirit," and "the promise of the Father" — which Jesus styled the "world-reproving Comforter" — were accepted as the Heaven-appointed means to all their success in winning souls and nations to Christ their King. Indeed, Christ, in repelling all Satan's suggested changes and substitutes, proclaimed that the very religion which the prophets had foretold, and which the Father had sent him to publish, was the true heir to God's promise, the only religion to which the Most High had ever pledged the spiritual dominion of the world.

But that third decision of the tempted founder of Christianity throws great light upon the momentous practical question we are now consider-

ing. For, as the third assault of Satan specially concerned *the method* of Christ's getting his spiritual empire over mankind, proposing to him as the best and only means a voluntary vassalage to his tempter, so Christ's so emphatic repulse of that temptation expressed the final decision of his own soul touching *the manner* of the world's subjection to him and his Christianity. A false and secularized religion calling itself Christian may win the world, with the consent and help both of the world and Satan; as historic Romanism has done. And a religion, compounded in various proportions of Christ's Christianity and the world's worldliness, will receive of course, in corresponding measures, the help of Jesus in aid of one element, and that of Satan and the world in aid of the other. But how shall Christianity undiluted and genuine, the very Christianity which the tempted author of it accepted and endorsed as Heaven's own religion, — how shall this ever gain the promised world-dominion? How in the view of Christ it cannot, and also how it can and will, are matters of vital interest to this Missionary, kingdom-seeking age; and his mental decision on both these points lies before us in his emphatic refusal of his tempter's three successive proposals, and especially of the last.

I. When he refused the suggestion to "command the stones to be made bread," Jesus virtu-

ally affirmed, that, not merely nor mainly by *business* agencies that look to bread supply, can his religion triumph in the world. But especially his conduct in this case declared, that, not by setting in the front its *humanitarian* work, not by supreme devotion to mankind's temporal needs, — as of “bread,” — can true Christianity make “all nations” Christian. That sort of benevolent ministry God had been trying for thousands of years, even toward the “unthankful and the evil;” but it had failed to convince and turn to him the race of men. Affirmatively this “wilderness” decision of Christ settled it, that, in conquering the world to him, his followers must forever rest for all needful supplies in this work simply and solely upon the divine promises, that his Christianity shall “live by every word of God;” and that, so trusting and living, it is to go forth confidently to its true, faithful prophet-work, evangelizing all nations and “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever Christ hath commanded.” And this implied that in the view of Jesus the truth-system of his Christianity — the Old Testament truths all of which he endorsed, and the New Testament truths which he and his apostles proclaimed, shining together on the world like the stars and sun at mid-day — is the complete and perfect argument of God with men, the one only and effective instrument for

“converting souls” to him, and so enlarging his true heart-kingdom on the earth; and that no supposed improvement of Christ’s doctrine, no diluted, modified, corrupted form of his system, will ever bring the world of men under his Heavenly rule.

2. This expectant world-conqueror, in repelling the “pinnacle” suggestion of his tempter, touched another point concerning the means to the triumph of his spiritual religion. The point in question was the attractive, or “drawing” power not less of Christianity than of its author. This temptation (as developed in a previous chapter) was to accept easy, miraculous feats of priestly and temple display, instead of the self-humiliation and painful self-sacrifices even unto death, which the prophetic Scriptures had set before him. The symbolical system of Judaism had made trial of the power of these outward religious grandeurs. And long before, even from the world’s creation, the matchless Architect and Artist had been all along proving the power of the highest beauty and material magnificence, and of creative miracles and divine wonders. Nothing more or grander in that direction could the All-wise Creator do. And now, tempted to prefer and to incorporate into his religion this method of drawing all men to him, Jesus repels, as presumptuous sin in him and as

out of harmony with his own Christianity, all such religious display as has no other intent or utility except its attractive power. He will not put "old wine" into "new bottles." And this decision expressed to all ages of his disciples Christ's own repudiation of religious self-display, of easy ceremonial, churchly splendor, and of temple magnificence, as a means of attracting men to genuine Christianity.

And, affirmatively, while holding fast so decidedly to the prophetic idea of his priesthood, he declared that the power of genuine God-like, self-sacrificing, boundless love, is *the* attraction of the divine religion he had come to found and to illustrate. God had "so loved the world" as to "give" *him*; and he so loved the world as to "give himself for it, an offering and a sacrifice to God." That sacrifice was neither ostentatious, nor easy, nor unnecessary; and it was by such love as that, that he would "draw all men unto him." By that "one sacrifice" the atonement needful for man's salvation was finished. But other needful salvation-work remains, — the whole tributary work of Christian humanity and Christian philanthropy, and that grandest of all Christian work, even the evangelizing and bringing to the feet of Jesus of "all the nations" of the earth. And in this work there is room and need for all

loving, Christ-like self-sacrifice, even "the filling up of that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ;" and in this brave, self-renouncing, working love lies, according to Christ's decision, the difficult, "abiding," mighty, and "more excellent way" of drawing lost human souls toward him and his salvation.

3. The "high-mountain" temptation, as we have already seen, expressly concerned Christ's method of reaching his dominion and kingdom. Tempted to distrust the power of love and the might of truth, and even the "world-convincing," promised help of the Holy Spirit, and offered "the kingdoms of the world," upon the easy condition of modifying his whole religion to meet the world's taste and will, he expressed in a most emphatic way to all the Christian ages his mind and will upon this most vital question. On the one hand, his indignant repulse of the tempter's suggestion affirms that the world is not invincible to the agencies and methods of genuine Christianity. He repudiates and condemns the idea of believing in the world's assumed friendliness to his religion. He interdicts all faith in its deceptive promise of giving to him and his Church the kingdom upon the condition of voluntary and subservient homage to the world, and declares such vassalage to be disloyalty to true Christianity and to the true God.

And, on the other hand, he determines to use and trust the converting power of God's own word and truth; to employ and rely upon the "drawing" power of genuine love; and to look to the promised "outpouring" of the Holy Spirit as the sure means to that dominion over souls which his heart so yearns for. And by this act and choice he commends these same Heaven-given means and methods and mighty agencies to all his kingdom-seeking followers to the end of time. And, moreover, he also declares his own assurance and conviction that only to his own unadulterated, unsecularized Christianity, using its own proper and appointed instrumentalities and methods, has God ever promised, or will in fact ever give, the "greatness of the kingdom."

And do not these views—which thus seem to have been involved and expressed in the three successive choices of the tempted Christ—find abundant historic illustration in every age of Christendom? Primitive Christianity, fresh and pure from the lips and life of Jesus and the Apostles, though in the face of the world's open scorn and cruel hate, and at the same time without any of the popular modern arts and attractive appliances, won a triumph which since their times has had no parallel. It wrought by Christ's own methods and agencies; and it prevailed. Similar results,

local or sporadic, have been seen in later ages. But in all ages the men, women, and churches by whom "much people have been added to the Lord" have always, like Barnabas, "been good, full of the Holy Ghost and faith." And the measure of conformity, in every age, to the chosen agencies and methods of Christ and the Apostles has corresponded to the defeats or the victories, the decline or the progress, the delays, reverses, and conquests, which have marked the strange and checkered history of Christianity for the last fifteen centuries. And in our own land do not the results of Christian organizations and efforts, so unlike in different churches and under different management, find their explanation upon the same grounds? The late Dr. Wayland of Brown University, in a prayer-meeting conversation with the young men of the college, once said, — the subject being the parable of the "leaven," — "Suppose that there was as much leaven as meal, and that it was hid for years in the meal, and yet did not leaven it at all: would you not think that it was pretty poor leaven?" On the other hand, how many modern successes and triumphs, at home and abroad, — the results of such Christian living and working as that of Whitefield, Wesley, Edwards, Nettleton, Daniel Baker, Pastor Harms, Elizabeth Fry, and Mary Lyon, — have illustrated the secret

of true Christian power and conquests! And has not Zion's unchanging God lamented over his modern Church as over his ancient Israel, saying, "Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should then have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries."¹

And have we now before us Christ's own decisive view of the spirit and the tactics,—the faith and love and loyalty,—which God has sealed and appointed as the only way really to save souls and to win the world for him? What, then, is the duty and the wisdom of all the true followers of Christ in this great Christian Republic, and in this missionary, kingdom-seeking age? On board this ship, morally storm-tossed and not wholly free from peril, they are like the "shipmen" who sailed with Paul; and "except they, abiding in the ship, do the shipmen's proper duty," notwithstanding all the wise, Paul-like predictions of our security, the nation "cannot be saved." And tempted so successfully and so universally as they have been by Satan and the world's last "mountain" snare, are they not called now to a decided change of tactics, of spirit, and of front?

And, first, as to the *weapons* of their victory. Was it ever heard that an army upon a cam-

¹ Psalms lxxxi. 13-16.

paing of conquest — unless consciously and utterly vanquished — surrendered, at the demand of the enemy, their only offensive arms? And yet is not this what we have more or less been doing? The whole divine armory of the Church supplies one only weapon of aggressive war, — “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” Are “enticing words of man’s wisdom” to be preferred? Shall our faith as Christians “stand in the wisdom” and popularity “of men,” or “in the power of God”? The prophetic summons to the Christ was; “Gird thy sword” (this same “Sword of the Spirit”) “upon thy thigh, O Most Mighty! and ride prosperously.” It is not likely that the wisdom of man will improve upon the message and argument of God as a means of saving lost souls. And this one conquering weapon God puts into the hand of every enlisted soldier, whether officer or private, man or woman. The “sons” and the “daughters” are “in these last days” “to prophesy,” — the women being “suffered” to “teach” the women, and “babes and sucklings to still the enemy.” And “young men” and “old men,” and “servants and handmaidens” are to bear witness, each in his proper way and sphere; to God’s saving truth. Jesus, our great Captain, has in these last days enlisted no non-combatants. And those whom God has specially put in trust

with the gospel, never more than now, need to lead back Christ's army to the armory, that "the men of God may be thoroughly furnished" unto good work. The holy "Comforter" works for and with—and even in sympathy with—God's faithful, witnessing people. But he is not wont to work without them. And how can the "world-reproving" Spirit do his proper conquering work, save through a "world-reproving" fearlessly faithful Church?

A second not less important change demanded now of all genuine Christians concerns the popular ideas and practice as to *attractive* Christian power. Nothing—as all the world believes and testifies—has so much of this power as love. But to have power, the objects of it must be thoroughly convinced that the love itself is earnest and genuine. The mother yearning over her children with the deepest of all earthly love,—how can she draw and hold them underneath her shelter and control? They are needy and suffering, and going astray, and want her tender, loving care. If she sends them good advice, and declares her affection for them in costless words, and spends her strength and means and time in self-adornment, ease, and pleasure, will she, can she, ever thus attract to herself their trust and love? And the humane and patriotic men and women whose

names have passed into history, — the John Howards, and Florence Nightingales, and George Washingtons, — how have they convinced the suffering, friendless, and oppressed that their love of man or love of country was not an empty pretence and name? Love, when the objects of it are in want or sorrow or distress, — captives, prisoners, prodigals, “lost,” — can never prove itself real and genuine except through some form of self-denial and self-sacrifice. These self-denials and sacrifices are recognized even among men as the measure of that love. And clothed in such forms love wields all its proper and unequalled “drawing” power. So the love of God towards men “was manifested.” He made all the sacrifice needful on his part to their salvation, and possible to him as God. He “gave his only-begotten Son” a “propitiation for the world’s sins.” It was also by self-denials and toils and sacrifices that Jesus “commended his love” in “seeking and saving lost” men. Such love as this in human hearts is not a growth of nature; it is something above nature. “Love” — self-renouncing love, like Christ’s — “is of God.” In every Christian Church and heart it is a supernatural element, the evidence of God’s own indwelling, the “abiding” Shekinah of the Christian tabernacle. It convinces, and it draws. For this end, it is “more

excellent" than the "best gifts" — miraculous, as they were — of the apostolic churches; and without it all religion "becomes as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." It melts down men's prejudices; it moves their hearts. And, coming to know and feel that there is such true unselfish love in Christian hearts on earth, men lose their scepticism, and at length believe that there is a loving God in Heaven, and that a loving Christ once died to save them. A Christianity that is all imbued and alive with such love as this attracts men. It draws them as hungering, thirsting, sin-burdened troubled souls were drawn to the lowly, self-denying Jesus while he lived on earth. And it draws them, as "all men" are "drawn," to the self-sacrificing, bleeding Saviour, by the death he died. This love is Christ's way of drawing men; and for his followers it is the only way of attracting them *to him*. And will not American churches and Christians substitute this in place of those cheap, meretricious arts and appliances — so used and trusted in under the power of the age-temptation — which only address and charm men's senses, like the tinklings of "brass" or the sounds of a "cymbal"?

Nor is this love a mere attraction. It is the mightiest internal moving force on earth. It is the life and actuating power of the Church of Christ.

Its "field is the world." And toward unsaved souls, rich or poor, cultivated or savage, in joy or wretchedness, at home or abroad, it is "the fulfilling of the law" and the essence of Christianity. And to this love it belongs, under the plan of God, to supply the means needful for all the humane, beneficent, and soul-saving agencies of the Christian Church. For this end "love" must make money. But is there not money enough already made, and in the hands of the professed followers of Christ? Is there not money enough in the Church—as Simeon Calhoun, the missionary, estimated—to give the gospel to the world within twenty years? Without sacrificing anything needful for the best development and culture of body, mind, and soul, simply by cutting off superfluities, self-indulgencies, and self-display,—what the loving John styles "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,"—can the Christians of these United States really supply all that God now in his providence calls for at home, and their share of all that Christendom ought to give? And is there not enough, then, of Christ-like love in the hearts of American Christians to make these self-denials for the world's sake and for him? Just here lies the difficulty. Self-denial, self-renunciation, world-renunciation, like Christ's own, are the hard thing to human nature. Some-

thing "good for food," something "pleasant to the eyes," — these are the old Eden temptations, powerful yet even over Christians. These are the two popular idols of "the world." And is there not more of Christian money spent in our country at these two shrines, than is benevolently consecrated to winning the kingdom at home and abroad for Christ? But "is not God the creator of the beautiful, and is not the love of beauty in a sense divine?" Yes. And so is also, in the same sense, the natural love of father and mother, and wife and children, and of one's own life. But there is a higher love than even any of these, and far higher therefore than any inborn love of beauty. For Jesus claims from his saved ones a love so much deeper, mightier, and more constraining, that in comparison he gives to all other love the name of "hate."¹ No earthly love, however right or sacred in itself, is to be set in competition with the love which the saved soul owes to its Saviour and to other souls unsaved, under his law of love. Jesus, who above all who ever lived on earth had power to clothe and surround himself with every form of material beauty, magnificence, and splendor, denied himself all this, was "made of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant." And surely those who have his "mind" will not

¹ Luke xiv. 26.

"fall down and do homage" to the world to get its money for supporting the institutions and enterprises of his religion; but, through cheerful self-denials like his own, will pour such steady streams of supply into the treasury of the Lord that, as in the days of Moses and the Tabernacle, there may at length be "much more than enough for the service of the work." The convincing, drawing power of such love as this, exemplified in Jerusalem after Pentecost and in ancient famished Judea, has been re-illustrated in our own times in the famine-stricken districts of China and India.

Moreover, this same Christlike philanthropy will furnish not only the sinews of "our warfare," but will also bring to the front the men and women, volunteers of Christ, ready for duty and all necessary danger. The young, strong, and educated ones of the Church will not stay at home in idleness, nor wait for easy, lucrative, pleasant places and work; but will hear the call of the Captain and Leader for recruits, and answer, "Here are we: send us!"

But, thirdly, the genuine Christians of our land — if the views this little volume has presented be true — are summoned to a change of front in relation to the unconverted world and its worldliness. If human nature, unchanged by the grace of God, be essentially the same under whatever garb and

name, then "the world" — as Jesus styled the material world's idolizers — is at heart the same world that once persecuted, and then seduced and corrupted, and then utterly secularized the historic Church of the first fifteen centuries; the very same that once rejected the Son of God and stifled in blood the voices of his apostles. Its ruling spirit, in every age the same, is that supreme and selfish love of "earthly things" which "is enmity against God," and therefore against genuine and living Christianity. Its assumed friendliness, in our own or any other age, is at best an unconscious pretence. And never is an enemy so dangerous as when coming in the garb of a friend. Confronted, then, in this age of the "mountain" temptation, by the same hostile world which Jesus once so yearned to win, — a world that assumes to be invincible by genuine, spiritual Christianity, and which at the same time offers the supremacy to a Christianity that will sufficiently secularize itself, — the tempted Christians of our land are called to assume, toward this real enemy whom they wish to reconcile to the very Jesus of the Scriptures, the same attitude which Christ and the Christians of his time and century assumed. And that was, —

I. A position of utter independence. Accepting genially all spontaneous willing kindness that did

not disguise an attempt to betray, — as the offered hospitality of the “Pharisee” and the cup of cold water from the woman that “was a sinner,” — yet Jesus never solicited nor expected from the worldling class any help of whatever kind in aid of the Christianity which he came to plant. The Joannas and the Susannas, and “many others” of kindred spirit, “ministered to him of their substance.” But he leaned on Heaven, and not at all upon the world, for the success and triumph of his religion; and this he said most emphatically, when he repelled the suggestion of the tempter upon the “high mountain.” Similar was the course of Paul in all his arduous, missionary work. And these are the “ensamples” for the Christians of all times: genialness, benevolence, helpfulness, but utter independence of an enemy, whether open or disguised, — an enemy to the true soul-saving work of genuine Christianity.

2. The attitude of Jesus and his first followers toward the world was also one of separation. That is, while mingling freely with even “publicans and sinners,” as a physician mingles with “the sick,” and while going everywhere and anywhere to “seek the lost,” his was yet an emphatic separation. Evidently to all men, he and “those whom the Father had then given him” were “not of the world;” and for that cause “the world hated

them." In a very true, deep sense, he and they were "separate from sinners." They never assimilated themselves to the world's worldliness for the sake of gaining influence over it. They had not "received the spirit of the world," but "the Spirit that is of God." They never assumed the sanctimonious, popular habits and ways of Jewish Pharisees, nor shared in the universal idolatries of Gentile festivals. They never went half way to meet the world in order to win it over to a half-way Christianity. And these men among whom "Jesus went in and out from his baptism to his ascension," and whom he commissioned to "teach all nations to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them," charged the Christians of all ages: "Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed." And, reasoning the case with the Christian common-sense, they argued: "For what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what agreement have ye, who are the temple of God, with idols? Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord." Whatever these apostolic commands may mean, they at least imply that whatever institutions, customs, or forms of pleasure in society are essentially and characteristically worldly, — originated, actuated, and ruled by the world and its spirit, and recognized among

men as badges of disregard for religion and of disloyalty to God, — these the followers of Christ cannot fellowship nor sustain, even under the tempting hope of thus winning over to their Master the world's votaries. "The cry has been, *Compromise!*" — said an American Evangelist, eminently blessed of God, — "but now, *separate! separate!* *separate!* is the thing for the Church. This is the way to power. The Church must cut itself utterly loose from the world."

3. One other changed relation toward the world, which the example and teachings of the tempted Christ now call American Christians to take, is that of aggressive hostility. Christianity was, indeed, christened by the angels as "Peace on earth, good-will to men." But God furnished it with a "sword," and sent it to a "warfare." It is Heaven's own saving agency on the earth; and, in sympathy with God's own love to the world, it must be hostile to all things that are hostile to man. As medical science and the medical profession, while in warm sympathy with the sick and suffering patients, are waging systematic war upon all the forms and causes of disease, so genuine Christianity — the divine science and art of soul-cure and heart-cure and sin-cure — is the benevolent, relentless enemy of all causes and kinds of sin. It fights all falsehoods, delusions, vices, and

wrong, even though men love them, believe in them, cling to them, and build them into long-lived systems, institutions, and customs; and so it comes, of necessity, into an attitude of aggression and hostility toward the world and its worldliness. And in taking this position, Christ and his apostles are our leaders and models.

Jesus had, on the high mountain, been tempted to believe the world friendly, and to compromise with it in order to get the kingdom. But behold him and his first followers, as they went forth among the then world of men! In Palestine, he was confronted by two false systems,—Jewish Phariseeism or formalism, and “liberal” or Sadducean Judaism. With those systems he showed no fellowship. Toward them he had no so-called charity. He loved and would have saved their blinded adherents; but toward the systems his attitude was one of uncompromising and sometimes terrible word-warfare, because they stood in the way of his soul-saving work. And true charity—embodied and represented in him—must, even in the nineteenth century, be just as “narrow” and just as “broad” as he. And after Christ’s ascension and under his commission we see apostolic Christianity, outside of Palestine, standing face to face with the world’s many-headed, mighty heathenism. This held the power; it ruled

the nations; its battalions of priesthoods, "craftsmen," camp-followers, and votaries covered the earth, — sincerely bigoted many of them, and blind. Confronting such a world, those few hundred Christians, taught of their Master, did not tremble, nor parley, nor propose a compromise. It was war — open, avowed, and exterminating war even to death — against all the idols and systems that stood thus between mankind and their own true God and Saviour. Whether it was philosophic heathenism as at Athens, or fierce and persecuting as at Philippi, or grand and artistic as at Ephesus, or upheld by imperial prestige and power as at Rome, — these dauntless imitators of their Master met it everywhere with a determined, aggressive hostility; at what expense to themselves we well remember. But they claimed the right to "obey God rather than men;" and won victories at which all men marvel.

And is there not a substantial analogy between the true work of Apostolic and of modern American Christianity? We recognize the same two systems here which confronted Christ in Palestine, and which stood between him and the souls he came to save. We do not, indeed, meet here the same formal, avowed, and doctrinal heathenism, with its graven images and its acknowledged worships. But do we not meet its counterpart? "God look-

eth on the heart," and so does true Christianity. And what is the essential difference between the Athenian worshipper of Minerva and the modern votary of Godless "Science"? How does the raving devotee of the god Bacchus two thousand years ago differ from his rum-idolizing, drunken brother of to-day? Or how were the *bona fide* pagans, who paid divine honors to the images of Fame, or of Fortune, or of Wealth, or of sensual Pleasure, unlike — in the sight of God — to those who, without the worshipful forms of heathenism, supremely love and live for the very same things to-day? If, in the view of Paul's Christianity, the "covetous man" (like every other worldling of that age) was an "idolater," what else are like-hearted and similarly living world-worshippers now? Is not the bullock that feeds between the fences, on the grass he loves, brother to the one that roams the forest unchecked? And so of the ancient and now outlying heathenisms, — their "essence" is here; nothing is lacking but the doctrine and the form. The pagan to whom Paul preached was one at heart with the American worldling of to-day; their heart-idols are exactly the same. And has not this popular and dominant heart-heathenism its temples, rites, institutions, "craftsmen," and priesthoods in our land to-day? Is not the supreme and selfish love

of earthly things the ruling spirit in our people now? And is not this the very thing which—like the ancient paganism—stands between unsaved souls and Christ?

What then must be the attitude of a soul-saving, kingdom-gaining Christianity towards the world's worldliness? It is outside the Church, and it is within it. How shall living Christianity deal with it? Shall we parley and compromise? Shall we treat it tenderly and call it by soft names? Shall we justify and "plead for" it? Shall we advocate a compromise with it, as the necessary and easiest and best way to secure the triumph of Christianity in our land? This is the Satanic way,—the very way which the tempter proposed to Jesus on the mountain. Shall we bridge our trenches, and tear away our *abatis*, and invite a promiscuous, worshipful intermingling of the hostile camps? When some of Israel, led by Aaron, had made for themselves an idol, proclaiming meanwhile a "feast to Jehovah," wherein they "sat down to eat and to drink and rose up to play," God and Moses did not endorse the compromise, but summoned all who were "on the Lord's side" to *bona fide* war upon this commingled heathenism. And ought not the genuine Christianity in our country,—now that the age-temptation has (as we have seen) so widely misled and compro-

mised our American Israel, — to take the law and the lesson of the time from the Christianity of the apostolic age? Shall it not present the same front to essentially the same enemy; and part off, by as broad a line as possible, the kingdom of Christ from the “principality” of Satan? And following the commands of our Leader and of the first commissioned officers of his little army, and adopting exactly their tactics in a campaign like theirs, shall we not wheel into line against the worldliness of the world, and wage aggressive war with “weapons not carnal but mighty,” assailing “strongholds,” and striving to bring the spirit and usages and life of all society “into captivity to the obedience of Christ”? In a warfare so like theirs we need their faith, — faith in the promise of “bread,” in the promise of “sufficient grace,” and especially in “the promise of the Father,” and in Christ’s “Lo, I am with you alway,” — the hope and pledge of successes and of triumph. And we need their love, — a brave, Christ-like, self-sacrificing love, the *esprit de corps* of the Christian army. And we need also a loyalty like theirs, — a loyalty that for Christian influence, Christian money, and the promised world-kingdom “goes on its knees” to God only; a loyalty to the supremacy of the Word and the Spirit in the earthly Church, and a trusting alone to their alli-

ance and might for winning at length "the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven."

Thus, in regard to the methods of winning souls and of gaining his own kingdom, Christ is "of God made unto us wisdom." The Christianity "that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful," but "meditates in the law of the Lord day and night,"—"whatsoever it doeth shall prosper." And "the victory that overcometh," not the world's temptations only, but "the world" itself, is "Our Faith,"—the faith of John, of Peter, of Paul, and of the apostolic age,¹ the faith of Jesus; in other words, the pure and genuine Christianity of Christ and the Bible. For such a Christianity our nation—the world's model republic—waits. For such a Christianity the world "groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." And such a Christianity will come, and will triumph. "Even so, Come, Lord Jesus!"

¹ John v. 4.

"THE AGE-TEMPTATION."

NOTE. — This volume was sent, in manuscript and anonymous, to the eminent Christian men and scholars whose names are undersigned ; who judged the work upon its merits, and returned to the writer of the Introduction their views, including the following

TESTIMONIALS:

"Vigorous and pleasing in style, and interesting in matter. The analogies presented between our Lord's temptation and that of His church are suggestive, and worthy of examination. The author's thoughts are stimulating, and in the right direction. We desire to see the book in print, and to read it at our leisure."

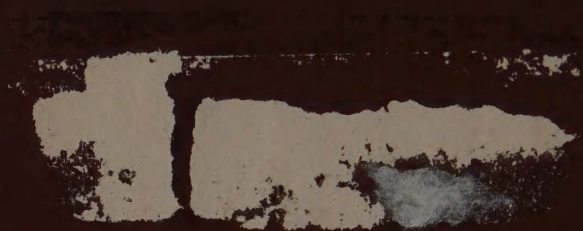
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